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The  
Connecticut River Valley  
In Southern  
Vermont and New Hampshire

By  
LYMAN S. HAYES

The History of Rockingham

Bellows Falls Illustrated

Navigation of The Connecticut River

History of Cumberland County, Ver-  
mont

Old Rockingham Meeting House

The  
Connecticut River Valley  
in Southern  
Vermont and New Hampshire

HISTORICAL SKETCHES

By LYMAN S. HAYES

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by  
LYMAN S. HAYES  
BELLOWS FALLS, VERMONT

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THE CANALS OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER  
SIX BUILT, AND OTHERS WERE PROJECTED, FOR  
NAVIGATION PURPOSES

The Connecticut is the longest river in New England, and has been more generally navigated, and to a longer distance from tidewater, than any other river in the same territory. Its length from the source among the Connecticut Lakes in northern New Hampshire to the mouth, Saybrook Point on Long Island Sound, is 335 miles, measured by the railroad lines along its banks. The river's winding course makes its entire length a somewhat greater distance. The fall in the water from the Connecticut Lakes to the Sound is 1,589 feet.

The canals of the river, built between 1791 and 1828 at six different points to overcome by means of locks the various falls and rapids along its course, represented an outlay of large amounts of capital for those days, and were an important factor in the navigation problem, especially in transportation by flat boats and steamers, as well as the large rafts of lumber loaded with merchandise of various kinds for the city markets.

It has been generally understood that the Middlesex Canal between Boston and Lowell, Mass., was the first canal built for navigation purposes in the United States, which is an error. That canal was started in 1794, Col. Loammi Baldwin, the engineer, removing the first turf in its construction on September 10th of that year. The Bellows Falls Canal, chartered in 1791, was commenced in 1792, and completed in 1802. The Middlesex Canal was opened for traffic during the year 1804, two years later than the Bellows Falls one.

## BELLOWS FALLS CANAL

The first of these canals to be chartered, and upon which work was commenced, was at Bellows Falls. It was in 1791 and was the first canal started on this continent to be used for navigation purposes. The charter was granted at Windsor in that year, and it is interesting to note that it was the first Vermont legislature after the admission of the state into the Union. Its corporate name was "Company for Rendering Connecticut River Navigable by Bellows Falls." The capital for its construction was furnished by three brothers of London, England, John, Francis and Hodgdon Atkinson. They expended \$105,338.13 in building the dam and canal before a boat passed through, and because of the natural obstructions, and great fall of the river (52 feet), it took ten years, the first boat passing through it in August of 1802. It remained in the ownership of the Atkinson family seventy-two years, or until June 16, 1866, and was then sold by them for \$65,000 to Ex-Gov. S. W. Hale and E. F. Lane of Keene, N. H. In 1871 the property was acquired from them by the purchase of the stock by Hon. William A. Russell, of Lawrence, Mass., who associated with him other enterprising and aggressive men, and from that time its more general utilization for water power has been an important factor in the business and growth of Bellows Falls.

## TURNERS FALLS AND SOUTH HADLEY FALLS CANALS

A charter to "The Proprietors of the Locks and Canals of the Connecticut River" was granted by the Massachusetts legislature February 23, 1792, to build canals by the falls at Turners Falls and South Hadley



Falls. The names of many prominent citizens were among the incorporators, but the capital for the building of these canals was furnished largely in Holland, through the medium of the Dutch trading firms of the Connecticut valley. Two years after the charter was granted the company was divided and the South Hadley canal was built by the company of the above name. The Turners Falls canal was built by a corporation named "The Proprietors of the Upper Locks and Canals on Connecticut River," the stockholders of the two companies being practically identical. The South Hadley canal was 2½ miles long, having eight locks, and the Turners Falls canal was 3 miles long and had ten locks as finally completed. The cost of the two canals was \$81,000 and the first boats passed through in the spring of 1795. In the early days of river navigation the Turners Falls canal was known as "Millers," and many misunderstandings have been caused.

#### THE CANAL AT HARTLAND, VERMONT

The canal and dam at Sumner's Falls, midway between Hartland and North Hartland, seven miles south of White River Junction, was chartered by the Vermont legislature in 1794 under the name of the "Company for Rendering Connecticut River Navigable by Water—Quechee Falls." Perez Gallup, who owned the farm contiguous to the canal on the Vermont side of the river, was named as the sole incorporator, although the New Hampshire legislature in 1796 named Joseph Kimball with Mr. Gallup. This canal was short, there being only two locks, remains of which can still be seen. Mr. Gallup controlled the franchise until 1805 when he

deeded a partial interest to several local citizens. They owned it until it passed into the hands of David H. Sumner, who built an extensive lumber mill, and sent large amounts of lumber and shingles to the down-river markets. The locks and mills were carried away for the second time in 1856 and the entire locality is deserted, nothing having been done toward rebuilding. The land and power rights are now controlled by the New England Power Association.

#### THE CANAL AT WILDER

The most northerly of the series of canals that were built was that at Olcott's Falls, now Wilder, Vt., two miles north of White River Junction. This canal had two sections with locks in each and was cut at the New Hampshire end of the dam. Each of the other canals was cut on the Vermont side of the river. This charter was granted by the Vermont legislature, October 21, 1795, but no work was done until incorporated by New Hampshire under an act approved June 12, 1807. This latter act was entitled "An Act Granting to Mills Olcott the Privilege of Locking White River Falls." It gave Mr. Olcott and his associates "the exclusive privilege of cutting canals and locking said falls and rendering Connecticut river navigable for boats and lumber from the head of said falls at the upper bar so called to the foot of the falls at the lower bar of the same, commonly called 'Phelps Bar,' " provided the same be completed within six years from the passage of the act.

Mills Olcott was a prominent resident of Hanover, N. H., at that time about thirty years of age. He, in company with others, began the erection of the dam and

locks in 1810 and they expended about forty thousand dollars upon the enterprise. At first the amount of business done afforded no dividends, but later when navigation of the river was at its height it became a source of satisfactory revenue. After the building of the Passumpsic division of the Boston & Maine railroad the canal fell into disuse and a few years later a freshet carried the dam away. From then for two or three decades the location was deserted except as a picturesque resort for picnic parties, the dense woods on either side and the beautiful falls of the river making it an attractive although lonely spot. About 1880 the rights were purchased by investors, a new dam built, mills erected, and today the village of Wilder containing about two thousand inhabitants nestles on the Vermont side of the river where fifty years ago there was not a dwelling in sight.

#### CANAL AT WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.

The sixth, last and most southerly of the canals built upon the Connecticut river was that at Windsor Locks, Conn. At the foot of this canal the tides of the Sound rise and fall, while the descent of the river overcome by the canal is about thirty feet in its length of six miles. It was built by the "Connecticut River Company" under a charter of the state of Connecticut secured in 1825 and completed in 1828. It was a part of a large scheme of the corporation to buy up all the canals and dams on the river; to spend large amounts in the improvement of the river bed; to erect other dams and canals, thus making navigation of the river more feasible, and freighting cheaper.

MANY ADDITIONAL CANALS WERE PROJECTED THAT WERE  
NEVER BUILT

Besides the six canals that were built on the Connecticut river, there were, during the period of navigation, a number of other canals strongly discussed and some chartered at different places but not built until the bubble of river navigation burst. In 1825 the War Department had sent an engineer to Barnet who had surveyed three different routes from there to Canada. At large expense and resulting from mass meetings of citizens held in different localities surveys were made for a system of canals from Wells River over the Green Mountains to Montpelier, thence down the Winooski to Lake Champlain; from the Merrimac near Concord up the Pemigewasset to Wentworth, N. H., and then across to the Connecticut in the town of Haverhill, N. H.; from Concord to Claremont via the Contocook and Sugar Rivers; from the mouth of Millers River near Greenfield to Boston; up the Deerfield Valley to the present Hoosac Tunnel, where the mountain was to be cut through and Troy reached via the Hoosac River, there to connect with the arteries of canals then being constructed, and thus reaching all parts of the country. A canal was already being constructed northward from New Haven, Conn., to Northampton, Mass.

A CANAL AT BRATTLEBORO

In the office of the Secretary of State of New Hampshire is to be seen an act of incorporation for a dam and canal near Brattleboro, evidently intended to avoid the rapid water just below the bridge, which, it is needless to say, was never constructed. The act chartered "The

Connecticut River Canal Company," the incorporators being Richard Kimball, Elias Lyman, Amos A. Brewster, Francis Goodhue, Henry Hubbard and Allen Wardner.

The company was authorized to construct a canal from some point in the town of Hinsdale to the mouth of Israel's river, with the right to cross Connecticut river and locate a part of said canal within the limits of the state of Vermont. The canal was to be not less than 34 feet wide at the surface of the water, 20 feet wide at the bottom, and 4 feet deep. The locks were to be of a length not less than 80 feet in the clear, and of such width, not less than 12 feet, that boats which could conveniently navigate Connecticut river might float and pass through the same. The authorized rates of toll were based on each mile's transportation on said canal and included the following: On each boat carrying less than 20 tons, one cent per mile; on each boat carrying more than 20 tons, one and one-half cents; on each boat used principally for the transportation of persons, ten cents per mile; and on each passenger carried three mills per mile. The capital stock of the company was exempt from all public taxes until the annual income should be sufficient to pay the necessary expenses and 6 per cent on the capital, but this provision terminated at the end of 30 years from the passage of the act.

#### CANALS AND LOCKS ON WHITE RIVER

The Vermont legislature on November 2, 1797, passed an Act granting to Elkanah Stevens and two others the exclusive right to lock White River from its mouth as far as "the Royalton Meeting House" under the name of "The Company for Locking White River."

Locks and dams were to be constructed at such places as the incorporators should deem necessary and the work was to be completed within ten years. The toll named for each ton of freight was twenty cents at each lock, and the same for each thousand feet of lumber. It is needless to say this enterprise was never entered upon and the charter was forfeited.

### THREE CANALS PROPOSED BETWEEN THE CONNECTICOT RIVER AND LAKE CHAMPLAIN

In the Vermont Watchman, printed in Montpelier, May 17, 1825, is the following account of a mass meeting in reference to projected canals:

“At a meeting of the citizens of the village of Montpelier, a committee was appointed to take into consideration the practicability of a canal to unite the waters of Lake Champlain and the Connecticut River. Three routes were examined starting from Burlington and following the Onion (Winooski) River to Marshfield, a distance of 48 miles, and thence to the mouth of Wells River, about 24 miles, making a total of 72 miles. At this point the committee divided, part of them exploring a route over the summit between Wells River and Marshfield. On this route they found two large ponds, surrounded by hills and mountains. From these ponds and Molly’s pond in Cabot, they found in their judgment sufficient water to supply a canal.

“Two other routes were also explored from the Onion River through the towns of Plainfield, Marshfield and Groton to the Wells River in Newbury. The committee afterwards proceeded to examine a southern route from Montpelier through Barre and Williamstown to Brookfield, through the gulf and thence to Royalton on the White River. There are two ponds on this route near each other at the summit, the outlet of one taking

a course south to the White River and the north to Onion River. These ponds they thought would supply plenty of water for a canal.”

A later report of this committee closed with these optimistic words: “We most earnestly hope that the fever will not abate until the cooling waters of the Connecticut shall meet and mingle with those of Lake Champlain.”

#### CANAL FROM CONCORD, N. H., TO CLAREMONT

In the office of the Secretary of State of New Hampshire are excellent profile maps and drawings, made in 1816, for a waterway from a point on the Merrimac River just below Concord to the outlet of Sugar River in Claremont, made jointly in behalf of Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

The scheme which the drawings disclose contemplated making use of the Contoocook, Warner and Sugar rivers, deepening their channels when necessary and providing many locks. A resurvey by engineers of the United States was reported to the Secretary of War in 1828, just a hundred years ago.

#### PRESENT DAY IMPROVEMENTS ASKED OF CONGRESS

The whole subject of canals and navigation of the Connecticut river has during the past few years been again brought into prominence through the united efforts of the citizens and boards of trade at Hartford, Springfield, Holyoke and places further north, looking toward again opening the river to navigation as far north as Holyoke. Measures have been before Congress for the

past twenty years calling for an appropriation of a number of million dollars for the improvement of the lower river as far north as Holyoke, to bring again the benefits of water transportation 50 miles farther north than at the present time.



INCIDENTS CONNECTED WITH THE BELLOWS  
FALLS CANAL—AND BOATING DAYS

The Bellows Falls canal and dam, which were during the years 1926, 1927 and 1928 entirely rebuilt for hydro-electric purposes, at an expense of about \$4,500,000, has a most interesting history. Built between the years 1792 and 1802 under charters by both Vermont and New Hampshire under the name of "Company for Rendering Connecticut River Navigable by Bellows Falls," it was used for that purpose until about 1858. The building of the railroads up the valley between 1849 and 1851 removed the necessity for this slow and expensive mode of transportation. During all the years of its existence it has been used more or less in furnishing power for various mills. English capital played an important part in the cost of the six canals of the Connecticut river, but none were so absolutely and unreservedly in the hands of foreigners as this.

The two men named as incorporators of the "Company for Rendering Connecticut River Navigable by Bellows Falls" were Dr. William Page of Charlestown, N. H., who became the engineer who constructed it, and General Lewis R. Morris of Springfield, Vt., who dropped out of the management within a few months. The first meeting of the stockholders was held in the "Tontine Coffee House" in the city of New York November 8, 1802, "present John Atkinson and James Carey."

By means of locks, of which there were nine at Bellows Falls, it was proposed to navigate the river upon an extensive scale as far north as Wells River and Barnet. In connection with this commerce it was pro-

posed to have canals built across the states of Vermont and New Hampshire, practically where the different lines of railroad now are. It is interesting to note that the first survey made for transportation purposes under Hoosac Mountain, in Massachusetts, was made for a canal to be tributary to those on the Connecticut river. The most important era of water transportation along the Connecticut river was from 1820 to about 1836, and may be said to have been at its height just about a century ago. The interest in railroad building in New England during the succeeding decade had the effect of quenching interest in canals and navigation.

During 1802, the same year the first boats passed through this canal, there was a "Carding and Fulling Mill" in operation, owned by Page & Atkinson. In 1812 the mills taking water from the canal had increased to two paper mills, two saw mills, two grist mills and a cotton mill, all of which were destroyed by fire during the night of May 11th of that year. From that time the number of mills here varied widely until the canal was acquired by the Russell interests, followed by the formation of the Fall Mountain Paper Company in 1872, which was merged into the International Paper Company in 1898. These have been the principal users of the power until now, although there are still a number of manufactories recently changed from water power to electricity. The power developed here by the water of the Connecticut river under the old and unscientific principles during the last few years aggregated 20,000 horse power, which has now increased by the development of electrical energy to 60,000 horse power.

The era of the use of the canal for navigation was a most interesting one, and the traditions brought down to the present of the time when the boatman's song was heard up and down the valley, instead of the locomotive whistle, give present residents glimpses of primitive methods of living, and of the activities of long ago. A goodly-sized poster notice under date of January 14, 1811, headed "Bellows Falls Canal," says among other things, "All concerned are notified that, in consequence of expensive repairs at the canal and locks and more that are proposed—to accommodate the navigation of the river, punctual payments must be made. Boxes must not be run into the canal until after notice is given and directions had, as much inconvenience is caused thereby to the passage of boats."

The locks at this time "would take in boxes 54 feet long and 18 feet wide, drawing no more than two feet of water," as stated in the notice. The "boxes" were rafts of logs passing down the river. The logs were round, fastened together by two-inch planks at each end and in the middle of each log. Through these planks a wooden pin was driven into each log, making a solid mass not more than 60 feet long and 18 feet wide. In coming down the river, except at points where they had to pass through canals and locks, these "boxes" were fastened together by a stout wooden pin at each corner of the box. These pins stuck up from 12 to 15 inches and over them were placed short planks with holes in them, thus yoking the boxes securely together, and the pins were also used for bracing the oars against for propelling and guiding the raft. Two boxes, side by side, and three in length, six in all, constituted a "raft," and it was in this form

that they passed down the river, except when it was necessary to "break up the rafts" into boxes to pass through the different canals.

By this old notice the tariff for "long sticks was 75 cents each, short ones, 50 cents. Two hhds. of liquors 70 cents. Salt the same." The notice was signed—"Charles Storer, Agent for The Company for Rendering Connecticut River Navigable by Bellows Falls."

William H. Fuller, a native of Bellows Falls and brother of the late Ex-Gov. Fuller, told the writer 25 years ago :

"I remember distinctly watching for the flat boats to come early in the spring and fall, but during the summer months they did not run unless there was very high water. I also remember the great rafts of logs and the lumber rafts with shingles, lath, clapboards and often wood and farm produce on board. We boys used to enjoy rides through the locks up and down, and it was a great treat for us when we could assist in pushing open the great gates that let them through the locks from one crib to another. I used to see them more above than below the dam as my home was on the corner of Rockingham and Green streets. When a heavy boat was pulled through the canal to the head above the dam, a number of men would tow it up to the bend of the river just at the head of Green Street, and I have known boats to tie up and wait there for a day or more for a breeze, then set sail and tack from one side of the river to the other till they were out of sight around the bend above Mr. Webb's. Before the railroad was built, the bend of the river just below Mr. Morgan's house used to be the place where boats and rafts tied up to piles driven for that purpose.

"The large rafts that came down the river were made in sections as large as would fill one of the cribs in the locks, were all pinned together and after tying up

in the bend above the dam, they were unpinned and dropped with ropes into the canal and when through the locks, were pinned together again and pushed out into the stream to go down.

“Some rafts contained twelve sections and had one or two shanties built upon them where the lumbermen slept and ate. There was but little traffic by boat after 1848, but rafts continued coming down as late as 1852. There was one class of navigators that interested the people intensely every year till as late as 1852; remnants of the Abenauqui tribe of Indians came down the river in the spring with their canoes and dugouts, pulled them up on the shore, and came up and pitched their wigwams at the foot of Oak Hill, bringing with them baskets, bows and arrows, mats, and a great many trinkets which were purchased by the people.”

Edward H. Green, who later in life married the great financier, Hetty Howland Robinson, told the writer in 1898:

“As a boy, I was one day watching a raft passing through the canal, handled by old Jack Adams, one of the best known river-men of his day. I stood on the old wooden bridge, first built across the canal just below where the present cement arch bridge is now on Bridge street. There was a long log on each side of the bridge to keep the teams from running off, and in my eagerness I leaned over the log too far and fell into the water 20 feet below, but Jack fished me out safely, and with no injury except a thorough ducking and great fright.”

## JOHN ATKINSON OF LONDON WHO BUILT THE CANAL—DESCENDANTS STILL IN BELLOWS FALLS

In the village of Bellows Falls on an eminence in the rear of the new town hall, and within a stone's throw therefrom, stands a pretty dwelling which many residents who have been here several years have never seen or known of its existence. It is partially surrounded by the stately trees which formerly gave to the hill the name of "Pine Hill," the north end of which has now been cut away and gravel, of which it was composed, has been spread well over both Rockingham and Walpole during the last few months. It is near the north side of Immanuel cemetery, at the end of a road, so there is no passing it.

This residence is still owned by descendants of Samuel C. Fleming. He was well known as one of the earliest passenger conductors running into Bellows Falls and later gained prominence as a hotel proprietor. He was a descendant of John Atkinson who came from London and built the Bellows Falls canal between 1792 and 1802. At the present time the pictures of seven generations look down from the walls of the house, while most of the people lie buried in the old church yard between it and Immanuel church, that John Atkinson founded, and to the interests of which his descendants have been devoted for more than a century and a quarter.

John Atkinson came from London before the Revolutionary War. He married a daughter of Ebenezer Storer, one of the early treasurers of Harvard College,

and settled in New York City, where he was a most prosperous and public-spirited man of its early days. His only weakness seems to have been too great a faith in the immediate future of his adopted country. He bought great tracts of land in Virginia, Ohio, Western New York and Vermont. Finally he purchased the water rights at Bellows Falls and built the canal here, as well as a number of the earliest manufactories of various kinds. At Bellows Falls he spent a portion of his summers, and when his optimism and a period of financial depression had brought him business troubles he was able, with the help of his English relatives, to retain his canal properties here and came here to live permanently. He died in Bellows Falls September 29, 1829, and sleeps in the cemetery near to the church which was so dear to him, and which he, in common with Dr. Samuel Cutler, was so instrumental in organizing in 1798. The Bellows Falls canal was retained in the ownership of the Atkinson family until June 16, 1866, when it was sold by them, with all the water rights and real estate here owned by them, for about \$65,000, which was but a small percentage of what it had cost them, and it had always been a losing proposition.

In 1817 Col. Alexander Fleming married Emma Seton, a daughter of John Atkinson, and in 1819 Henry F. Green married another daughter, Caroline Francis. These two men were destined to become important factors in the business of Bellows Falls, as, under the firm name of Green & Fleming, they managed the canal for the Atkinsons from about the above years until their deaths, Col. Fleming being the clerk of the Canal Company 47 years. The firm erected a paper mill, which was de-

stroyed by fire in 1846, and they had other manufacturing interests, as well as joint investments. Green street of this village was named for Mr. Green, through whose land the street was cut. The firm built in 1829 the two prominent residences on the Terrace, one now owned by James H. Williams and the other owned and occupied by the Rockingham hospital.

The intimate relations between these two men are shown by the fact that these two residences were erected with the firm's money without any decision as to which would occupy either. When they were completed they sat down and played a game of cards to decide the choice. Captain Green won the game and chose the Rockingham hospital building. In 1826 Captain Green had built the house now known as the Fleming house, described earlier in this sketch, and it was occupied by his family until the completion of the two residences in 1829.

During the years that Green & Fleming were the agents and managers of the Bellows Falls canal their office was in a small frame building which stood on the brow of the terrace in the rear of the present clothing store of J. J. Fenton & Co. All boats passing through the canal stopped there and paid the tolls charged for passing. The bank was steep and high above the surface of the canal, making quite an effort for the boatmen to get up there. It was said that many oaths were registered on high against the records of the river-men, who swore roundly at the effort required to get up to the office.



BOAT CLUBS—MOTOR BOATING—BOATS OVER  
THE FALLS—CAPTAIN PAUL BOYTON

Boating on the Connecticut river has had various changes since the red man used it as a highway on his different errands of either fishing or more warlike expeditions. Its use as an artery of commerce during the era when it was used for freighting, and to a small extent for passenger service, from the time the Bellows Falls canal was completed in 1802 until the railroads were built in the middle of the last century, has been the subject of many interesting articles in newspapers in years gone by. Not so much attention has been given to boating of later years.

In 1859 both Brattleboro and Bellows Falls had active boat clubs that had much enjoyment from their experiences on the water. In May of that year the Green Mountain Boat Club of Brattleboro made an excursion up the river to Bellows Falls. They started from there at 5 o'clock in the morning and landed at the old canal locks here about one in the afternoon, having rowed about 27 miles. A number of Bellows Falls citizens dined with them here at the old Bellows Falls Stage House, the party comprising some of the most prominent citizens of both villages.

Each of the Brattleboro men wore a sailor's shirt neatly made of blue flannel. Their standard colors, then recently presented to them by the ladies of Brattleboro, were of tasty design and made quite a show as the party came up from the river. The boat was named "Swift Water" and was 42 feet in length. The officers of their club at that time were: president, Philip Wells; vice-

president, C. A. Miles, for many years the head of the schools there; secretary and treasurer, Dr. J. M. Comegys; coxswain, Henry Goodridge; first assistant, W. H. Rockwell; second assistant, Charles A. Tripp. They started on their return trip a little past 4 o'clock, giving three cheers for Bellows Falls, which was immediately responded to by a large number of our citizens who lined the shore.

During that season the Swift Water Boat Club was challenged by the Wantastiquet Boat Club, also of Brattleboro, for a boat race to Bellows Falls for a purse of \$400, each party to contribute \$200 of it, and the whole to go to the successful boat. Considerable discussion arose over the terms and conditions of the challenge. Until the building of the Vernon dam Bellows Falls had the advantage of Brattleboro in the matter of about 15 miles of comparatively still water above the dam here, but at the present time the facilities for this sport are about equal.

In the year 1909, and for several years before and after, motor boating was enjoyed here to a great extent, there being that year 47 such craft in active commission, 12 new power boats having been put on the river that season. A large boat club was enjoying the river here and they had a well equipped club house just above the Vermont end of the steel arch bridge, with a large hall for dancing, and the basement was used to store the boats. Each evening, and Sundays, the river was alive with boats and throngs of people watched them from the shores and the bridge. The interest has gradually waned, until for the last few years only one or two pleasure

boats plow the waters, and the same is true at Brattleboro.

The river falls 52 feet here where it passes from the north to the south end of the village. Because of the rapidity of the current, and the jagged rocks, it is often said no boat ever successfully passed through these falls, but that statement is erroneous. August 11, 1876, a party of river-men who were handling one of the large drives of Ross & Leavitt's logs then passing down the river, did the stunt. Five different boats passed through the entire length of the falls, each manned by two men. The men in boat No. 1 were Henry Davis and William Doane; No. 2, Gorham Spencer and Frank Dudley; No. 3, Ben Mitchell, John Murphy; No. 4, Frank Mohawk, Joseph Swartson; No. 5, Henry Wadleigh and John Murphy. The last boat went down twice, and Henry Davis did the same. Three of the boats dipped some water, but two went over dry. Each man handled one oar, guiding the boat from both the prow and stern. The water was very low at the time and the river-men became daring and conquered.

A few of the present residents remember the incident of Capt. Paul Boyton passing through the falls and under the toll bridge in his rubber floating suit. He was on a pleasure trip down the Connecticut and arrived at the dam just at night, October 29, 1879. During the evening it became known that he would go through the falls the next morning and it was estimated that a crowd of 2000 people gathered to watch the feat. So many occupied vantage places on the toll bridge that fears were entertained for its safety and some were or-

dered off. The water was somewhat high and rushed through the gorge with mighty force.

He went into the water just below the dam and with his paddle struck out for the center of the current, being carried swiftly down. He was caught a number of times in the eddies and carried round and round, giving him a hard pull to get out into the current. When at last he went through the place where the water rushes with the greatest force, just above the Fitchburg bridge, he went out of sight and did not appear seemingly for some minutes; the hair of the spectators stood on end with horror.

He, however, soon appeared a long distance down the river and came out of the water from the eddy below. At Town's hotel that evening in discussing the day's experience he stated that it was the worst in his life, and that nothing would ever tempt him to try these falls again. He said the water bore him down with a terrible weight to the bottom of the channel, and for a few moments he confidently expected it would hold him there to his death.

FLAT-BOATING ON THE CONNECTICUT RIVER—  
CAPT. CHARLES DAVENPORT'S EXPERIENCES

Present residents along the course of the Connecticut river can hardly imagine the fact that a century ago this river was teeming with both freight and passenger boats, and that it furnished the only means of transportation north and south except the cumbrous ox teams over the most primitive roads imaginable. It is the longest river in New England, and has been more generally navigated, and for a longer distance from its mouth. The railroads up the valley, built about 1850, entirely changed the conditions of transportation, and boating was discontinued, the happy songs of the boatmen being exchanged for the shrill whistle of the locomotive.

Twenty-five years ago there were a few of the old boatmen, and some who had served as captains of the river boats, still living at different places along the river's course. October 17, 1903, the writer secured personal reminiscences of Captain Charles Davenport, then living in the village of Saxtons River at the age of over 90 years. He was still vigorous, reading readily without the assistance of glasses. Among other things he said:

“I was born on a farm in West Dummerston April 21st, 1813. When 19 years of age my father licked me for some minor offense, and feeling aggrieved, I ran away. I hired out to the captain of a river boat as a deck hand. I followed boating on the Connecticut continuously for 30 years with the exception of a few years' experience on the Mississippi river. The larger part of the time I was captain of different boats, and my boating

on the Connecticut was confined to flat-boats. Most of the boats on the Connecticut were 72 feet long and 11½ feet wide, and when loaded to their capacity of 30 tons would draw two to three feet of water.

“The first boat I ran on was owned by Hall & Townsley of Brattleboro and ran from there to Hartford, Conn. Then I worked on one owned by William S. Bennett of Westminster. This I ran as captain for three years, in the neighborhood of 1835. Later, I commanded the boat which was owned by Wentworth & Bingham of Bellows Falls. They were merchants, doing business in the two-story brick block on the south side of the Square, known then, and now, as Mammoth block. The last of my boating at about the time of the building of the railroads, I was in command of a boat running from Windsor to Hartford, Conn., owned by Hosea Reed of West Reading, Vt., who had two different boats. Benjamin Smith, who owned the boat on which L. S. Howard of Bellows Falls worked, lived at Cambridgeport, and at different times my two brothers, George and Austin Davenport, were his captains.

“During my boating career, I spent two years on the Mississippi river as assistant engineer of a steamer, of which my uncle, John Davenport, was chief engineer. While on that boat it was chartered and made three trips, transporting 900 Indians from New Orleans to a point 750 miles up the Arkansas river. They were Cherokees from Georgia and had swapped land in that state for a reservation in the Indian Territory. They were accompanied by a large number of negro slaves whom they owned. They stopped twice a day on the banks of the river to cook their food.

“Over 40 years after this three Indians came to Bellows Falls where I was laying stone. One slapped me on the shoulder and said, ‘Me knowed you in Arkansas,’ which he proved by telling the story of my saving an Indian from drowning on one of these trips. It seemed to me a wonderful recognition after so many

years had passed. One day while hunting in Arkansas, Uncle John and I came across a bear and two cubs. The bear escaped but we caught the cubs. Uncle John took one to New Orleans and sold it. The other I boxed up and brought east all the way by stage. For two seasons, my bear, 'Betsey,' accompanied me in my boating on the Connecticut, being chained on my boat. She was very playful, hugging and wrestling with me. She died at the end of the second season and was buried in Dummerston.

"While on the Mississippi my steamer anchored about eight rods from the shore one night, near another steamer. One boat took fire and both were burned. 'Betsey' and I were the last to swim ashore, she reaching the shore first and waiting for me. I lost my clothing and \$250, one season's pay, which had been given me the day before. Uncle John and I reached the shore without clothing and a merchant gave us each a suit of clothes, saying we might pay for them if we ever could do so. This we did the next fall.

"I know of no other person now living except Mr. Howard who worked on Connecticut river boats running as far north as Brattleboro. Capt Nelson Richardson, who died last year at Hinsdale, N. H., was the last one I know of. Patrick Tolles, who lived across the river opposite Bellows Falls, became captain of the Wentworth & Bingham boat when I resigned. I think he was a brother of the Matt Tolles of recent years. The last boat I ran was one owned at Dummerston. When boating on the river was given up, the boat was pulled up on the shore near C. P. Gilson's and I dismantled it. Her hulk rotting on the shore there for many years was one of the last reminders of the old boating days on the Connecticut."

NOTED WORLD TRAVELER—JOHN LEDYARD—  
IN BELLOWS FALLS IN 1772

About 30 rods north of the “Ledyard” or Hanover and Norwich bridge, about 40 miles north of here, is a monument to one of the most novel and unique characters who attended Dartmouth College in the early period of its existence. It is a plain slab of granite and records the following bit of history:

“John Ledyard, in 1772, a freshman of Dartmouth College, on this spot felled a giant pine, from which he made a canoe, and in it descended the river to Hartford, Ct. He was a traveler among the Indians, and associate of John Paul Jones, and an officer under Capt. Cook, traversing all oceans and penetrating all lands. He foresaw and foretold the riches of the Pacific coast and the advantages of commerce with the far East. When about to cross Africa he died in Egypt at the age of 37. He, too, heard the voice crying in the wilderness. His was the Dartmouth spirit. Anno Domini 1907.”

Ledyard went up to Hanover in 1772, driving up from Hartford in a sulky, the first ever seen in this vicinity. The same year, leaving his lessons, in which he was no mean scholar, he went down to the banks of the Connecticut river, cut down a tall pine, and, as tradition relates, hewed from it a canoe 50 feet long and three feet wide, in which he placed a huge bear skin, two books, an Ovid and a Greek testament, some provisions of Indian bread, and started on his journeys around the world.

Pierpont's national reader (1839) says in its detailed account of the trip that



“He was deeply engaged in one of his two books when his canoe reached Bellows Falls, where he was suddenly roused by the noise of waters. (No dam or canal had been built there then.) The danger was imminent as the voyage was performed in the last part of April, when the river was raised by the melting of snow and no boat could go down that fall without being dashed to pieces.

“With difficulty he gained the shore and through the kind assistance of the people, who were amazed at the novelty of such a voyage, his canoe was drawn by oxen around the fall and committed again to the water below. One account says that the young student impressed the people so favorably while resting here that every attention of kindness was bestowed upon him. From that time till he arrived at his place of destination we hear of no accident.”

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Of his arrival at Hartford the same authority says:

“On a bright spring morning just as the sun was rising some people at Hartford standing upon a high bank which overlooked a small river which empties into the Connecticut, espied at some distance an object of unusual appearance, moving slowly up the stream. All were attracted by the unusual sight and conjectured what it could be till its shape assumed the obvious form of a canoe but by what impulse it was moved forward no one could determine. Something was seen in the stern but apparently without life or motion. At length the canoe touched the shore directly in front; a person sprang from the stern to a rock in the edge of the water, threw off a bearskin in which it had been enveloped, and behold John Ledyard in the presence of his uncle and connections, who were filled with wonder at the sudden apparition, for they had received no intelligence of his intention to leave Dartmouth but supposed him still there diligently fitting himself to be a missionary to the Indians.”

He studied theology at Hartford for a short time and then shipped for Gibraltar, where he enlisted in the British army, was released later, came to America, and next is found traveling on foot in England, both hungry and scant of raiment. He was with Capt. Cook as a corporal of marines on his third voyage around the world, and was with him when he was attacked and killed by the savages. He later published a book giving an account of the voyage.

He was characterized as "the famous Dartmouth traveler," achieving fame all over the world. When about to cross Africa he died in Egypt in the city of Cairo in 1789.

CANALS OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER AT  
HARTLAND AND WILDER

In the improvement of the Connecticut river for navigation purposes, a little over a century and a quarter ago, there were two canals built north of Bellows Falls, but of much less importance than the one here. This was chartered by the Vermont legislature in 1791, the first of any canal in this country to be built for navigation purposes. The other two were at Hartland and at Wilder.

The falls near Hartland, which were thus overcome, are located just above that railroad station and behind a hill so that few people have in late years known anything of them. For many years past the locality has been known as "Sumner's Falls." The charter was granted by the Vermont legislature October 22, 1794, under the cumbersome name of "Company for Rendering Connecticut River Navigable by Water—Quechee Falls." The New Hampshire charter was dated in December, 1796. The Vermont charter was granted to Perez Gallup, a prominent farmer of Hartland, who owned the farm contiguous to the falls. This canal was very short, the two locks being at the Vermont end of the dam and the fall of the river at that point was but twelve feet. Remains of a portion of the dam could be seen until very recently. The New Hampshire charter named Joseph Kimball with Mr. Gallup, but Mr. Gallup was the sole owner and manager, controlling all matters pertaining to the canal until March, 1805, when he sold an eighth interest each to David Fuller and Abner Mack of Gilsum, N. H., Leonard Pulsipher of Plainsfield, N. H., and Oliver

Gallup, Elias Gallup and Hugh Campbell of Hartland. These parties completed the canal and operated it some years, when it passed into the hands of David H. Sumner, or at least was managed by him.

The charters of the canal were similar in their terms to that of the Bellows Falls canal, except the price named for tolls was upon a basis of "eighteen pence per ton of freight." The charter granted by New Hampshire named the following: "For each boat loaded or not loaded, five cents per ton according to the weight of goods it will carry; for every ton of goods, wares and merchandise not exceeding five tons, ten cents; for every additional ton above five, six cents; and each thousand of clapboards eight cents; shingles, two cents; boards, twelve cents, and each ton of timber, six cents.

In addition to managing the locks, Mr. Sumner erected an extensive lumber mill and for many years he was the largest dealer in lumber in this section of New England, owning at one time over 6000 acres of woodland in Vermont and New Hampshire. He also had an extensive lumber yard in one of the Connecticut cities located on the river, to which he sent large amounts of dressed lumber by rafts, employing a large force of rivermen to drive it down. He died in 1868 at the age of 90 years.

The mills and the locks were carried away for the second time in 1856, and from that time the place has been entirely deserted except as a resort for picnic parties. In August, 1881, all water rights and lands in its vicinity were purchased by Daniel H., John C. and Moses Newton of Holyoke, Mass. After these men had expended large sums in arranging the foundations of

an extensive paper industry, the Ottauquechee Woolen Company, located at North Hartland and having water rights near the mouth of the river of that name, enjoined the Newtons from rebuilding the dam. After litigation the injunction was dissolved, but in the interim the Newtons had located their extensive works at Readsboro and Wilmington on the Deerfield river, and the expectations of the Hartland location being utilized by them vanished. July 31, 1886, all power rights on the Connecticut at that point were sold to the late Hon. William A. Russell of Lawrence, Mass., who had 16 years earlier purchased the water rights at Bellows Falls and was busily engaged in building up his extensive mills here. It is understood that as a part of his estate the title at Hartland went to the International Paper Company, and, like the Bellows Falls plant, may sometime be utilized as a part of the New England Power system now being developed at various points on the Connecticut and Deerfield rivers.

During the years of the navigation of the river by flat boats and steamers, the Hartland landing for freight and passengers was always known as "Short's Landing," and was located below the locks only a few rods east of the present Central Vermont railroad station, but not in sight from it.

The most northerly of the chain of canals along the Connecticut river, making possible for over 50 years the passage of freight boats as far north as McIndoes Falls in Barnet, was the one at Wilder. It was chartered by the Vermont legislature October 21, 1796, under the name of "The Proprietors of White River Falls Bridge," giving rights to build both the canal and the bridge.

The canal was to be built two miles north of the mouth of White river, and the bridge across the Connecticut at what is now White River Junction. The bridge was to be completed in four years and the canal in seven, which was done. The incorporators were Ebenezer Brewster and Rufus Graves of Hanover and Aaron Hutchinson of Lebanon, N. H.

There were two separate canals, with locks in each, and with but a few rods between them. They were used but little after the Passumpsic railroad was built in 1852, and a few years later the dam was carried away by a freshet. From that time until about 1880 the locks and power were in disuse and falling to decay, visited only by picnic parties. Since then the power has been utilized by the paper and pulp mills of the International Paper Company, and a village of about 2,000 inhabitants has grown up about them. These mills were in 1928 closed down, probably permanently, the same as the previous year had been done at Bellows Falls, with the prospect that the fall in the river will be turned later to generating electrical power for distribution throughout New England.

## EXPERIENCES OF A CONNECTICUT RIVER RAFTING GANG WITH 18 RAFTS IN 1854

The present changes being made in the Bellows Falls canal, redeveloping it for electrical transmission, makes any early experiences of its use of particular importance and interest.

More than 25 years ago the following story of actual experiences with a rafting gang passing here were told to the writer by C. W. Bliss, then a well-known merchant of West Fairlee, Vt. In May of 1854, when a boy of 18, he made a trip down the Connecticut river in the capacity of cook for the raftsmen. He said:—

“The lumber was round logs cut sixty feet long. They were fastened together by two-inch planks at each end and in the middle of each log. Through these planks a wooden pin was driven into each log, making a solid mass about twelve feet wide and sixty long, which was called, in the river parlance, a ‘box.’ From the end of the planks, at each corner of the box, a stout hard wood pin stuck up fifteen inches or more, against which were braced oars for propelling and guiding the box, and over which could be placed short planks with holes in them, thus yoking the boxes securely together. Two boxes, side by side, and three in length, six in all, constituted a ‘raft’ or ‘division,’ and it was in this form that the trip down the river was made, except when it was necessary to ‘break up the rafts’ into boxes in order to pass through the different canals.

“There were eighteen rafts in our lot and we had eighteen men. It took two men to navigate each raft with rough oars at opposite corners and so the practice was for the men to take nine rafts as far down the river as possible and make connections with a north bound passenger train; then go back and bring the **other nine**

down. A rough board shanty nearly covered one box. One end was used as dining room and kitchen, the other for sleeping purposes. An old elevated-oven stove was used in cooking. In the sleeping end, a liberal quantity of straw was thrown loosely on the logs on which the men slept with their clothes on. They lay in two rows with heads towards the sides of the raft and feet in the middle. I bought at different points white bread and I made brown bread, cooked potatoes, beans, tea and coffee. These constituted the whole bill of fare. The men were always sure to reach the raft on which was the shanty at meal time and at night. The rafts, when left at night, or at other times, were tied to trees on the shore.

“The lumber in the raft on which I shipped, was owned by an old man named Richardson from Orford, N. H., who accompanied us by train, coming aboard frequently. It came from much farther north than Orford and was to go to Holyoke, but not making a sale of it there, it was taken along to Middletown, Conn. I joined the party at the locks at what is now Wilder, just north of White River Junction, and left it at Holyoke, having hired out only to go this distance, and having become tired of it. It took three weeks and four days between those two points. My pay was \$1 per day while the regular men had \$1.50. One ‘pilot’ was among the men, who knew the channel of the river at all points, and he received \$3 per day. An additional pilot was taken on at two different points, one called the ‘Geese’ and the other ‘The Tunnel,’ on account of the swiftness of the water and the dangerous rocks at both places. The pilots or ‘swift-water men,’ at each place knew the rocks perfectly and they took the head of the first raft, guiding that, the rest following in exactly the same course.

“When the rafts reached Bellows Falls, it took the men three days to break them up and get the one hundred and eight boxes through the locks and put them together again. One of these days was Sunday, but the river-men always had to work on Sunday the same as on other days.



That day, I think there were at least five hundred people on the banks of the river and the canal watching our work. There was considerable competition between the men on the different rafts on the long stretch of still water above the dam to see which raft would get down to the canal first. As the river was broad and still for some miles, it gave them their best chance for sculling, but the movement was necessarily slow.

“After getting out of the lower locks at Bellows Falls, I remember seeing a number of small dwellings near the locks on the Vermont side. From one of these an old Irishman’s cow had wandered down over the broad beach into the water in which she stood up to her body. The irate wife of the old man came down and called the cow loud and long, but she would not come ashore. The woman yelled a command to her ‘old man’ to come and drive the cow out. ‘The divil a bit will I do it,’ says he, and after soundly berating him for his neglect, she calmly gathered her skirts about her high enough to keep them from getting wet, and walked in, driving the cow home herself.

“Among the men was a large and powerful half-breed Indian named Sam Flint, who stood six feet four inches, and was very strong. He was a general favorite and in all cases when any of the boys went ashore, and it was thought there might be trouble from drinking or otherwise, they wanted Sam to go to protect them. There were many places along the river where rough crowds gathered at saloons. As the raft was leaving the eddy at Bellows Falls, Sam made a misstep and landed in the river, but was readily pulled aboard again and worked with his wet clothes on until they were dried. No other man got a ducking during the trip.”

## HOW COLONEL ENOCH HALE LOST THE TOLL BRIDGE BECAUSE OF HIS SON'S "PETTING"

An incident of much interest in the history of the old toll bridge across the Connecticut river at this point was told by the descendants of Col. Enoch Hale, who built the bridge across the Connecticut river, the only one then in its entire length. In its early years it had a great reputation for its scenic surroundings.

Col. Hale, although a man of some wealth during the most of his life, became involved at one time and mortgaged the toll bridge. About the year 1800 the mortgage fell due. It was to Rudolph Geyer, a wealthy Englishman, who had built, and occupied a portion of the year, the large three-story dwelling that is shown in a painting of the first bridge now hanging in the town library. It was known in all the later years as the "Tucker mansion" and was taken down when the Cheshire railroad was built in 1848. Mr. Geyer had another home at Boston and spent a large part of each year in that city. He had for a long time coveted the ownership of the bridge as a good paying piece of property, but Col. Hale held to it with an iron grip. The mortgage referred to being a time mortgage of the class that if not paid when due the bridge would pass into the ownership of the mortgagee, made it important that the amount should be paid before a certain day, and Col. Hale hustled around and barely raised the amount in time to send it to Boston to reach there the day before it should pass out of his hands.

He sent the money by a son, who went by stage and in stopping at a hotel on the way he met his wife, from

whom he had separated some years before. At the hotel the old difficulties were discussed and satisfactorily adjusted, but in his renewed joys he became forgetful of trust and delayed his trip till it was too late to reach Boston in time to pay the mortgage. He rushed into Mr. Geyer's office the day after it had become due, and was informed the money would not be accepted and that his father had lost the bridge through his delay.

Mr. Geyer, obtaining an ownership in this questionable manner, retained it until his death, which occurred about 1820. In the division of this estate the bridge fell to a daughter who had married Nathaniel Tucker, from whose ownership it has since been known as the "Tucker bridge."

The old bridge was replaced in 1840 by the present lattice truss bridge, which has been a landmark here ever since its erection. The original bridge was what was known as a half deck bridge and the sides came only six or eight feet above the roadway. It was located just where the present bridge is, except that it was lower down in the gorge some 15 feet, there being a sharp incline at each end to reach it.

## THE FIRST TELEGRAPHIC TRAIN ORDER IN THE UNITED STATES

The first railroad train ever moved in this country under instructions received by telegraph is understood to have been on the Rutland road between here and Burlington in 1852. Both the railroads and the telegraph had been utilized but a few years in this country when an incident occurred on this railroad which was the initiation of the present general system of moving trains by telegraph.

Until that year railroads had no telegraph service of their own. Trains were operated wholly by timecard rules, which provided that one train would wait at a certain station until another train had passed. If one train was late at the meeting point the other was required to wait 12 hours or until the other showed up. Such a condition existed on the winter morning in February, 1852, when the first telegraphic train order flashed over the wires. The northbound train due to meet the southbound train at Middlebury was in a snowbank in the Green Mountains between here and Rutland. Albert H. Copeland, who worked in the postoffice at Middlebury at that time, was also the local operator.

The conductor of the southbound train was, of course, unaware of the stalled train at the south, and only knew that he and his passengers had before them a wait at Middlebury anywhere from 12 minutes to 12 hours, when at the expiration of the latter time his train regained its right to proceed to Rutland. As the length of delay increased, the restless, irritated passengers grew bold and wandered uptown from the depot. Some

of them straggled into the postoffice and happened to tell Copeland of the delay. The operator thought a moment, then he said: "You bring the conductor up here and perhaps we can fix it so that you can go on to Rutland without waiting for the northbound train."

The conductor demurred, but finally acceded to the demands of his irate passengers. Upon arrival at the postoffice, Mr. Copeland handed him a message from his superintendent at Rutland. It read something like this: "Northbound train in snowbank south of here. You come on down to Rutland and I will not let any train go north until you arrive."

Mr. Conductor read his order, looked Copeland straight in the eye and said: "I am afraid to do this. I might be taking a chance. How do I know it is genuine?" Copeland quietly replied, "I'll ride on the engine to Rutland." That settled it and the train went on its way, the passengers rejoicing and heartily thanking the operator, who kept up a wonderful amount of thinking while quietly sitting in the cab from Middlebury to Rutland.

Albert H. Copeland a few years later removed to Milwaukee, Wis., where he died about 1900 at the age of 85 years. He often referred to his experience in getting the train through and riding on the locomotive.

FIRST TELEGRAPH OFFICE IN BELLOWS  
FALLS IN 1851—THE BAIN SYSTEM

When the Cheshire Railroad was completed to Bellows Falls in 1849 there was no telegraph line, and for some months there was no arrangement whereby if trains were late they could be reached by telegraph. Trains going in the opposite direction had to wait until those delayed came, or take the chances of a collision. About the time of the completion of the Vermont Valley railroad, in 1851, telegraph service was established.

Among the first operators here was the young boy, Levi K. Fuller, whose parents lived at the north end of Green street, and who later became governor of Vermont; Fid Randall, who later became general train despatcher of the Vermont Central lines; a young man named Mott, who was succeeded in the '60s by William Batchelder, a few years ago an attorney at White River Junction. Mr. Batchelder said: "Mr. Mott's office was in the northeast corner of the railroad waiting room, and in addition to delivering all his own messages he sold paper collars and cuffs, which were then just invented and popular."

The telegraph company's records show that the Vermont & Boston Telegraph Company was incorporated November 11, 1848. The line through here from White River Junction to Springfield, Mass., was completed in October, 1851, under Jesse C. Rowe, superintendent. This was a line built and operated under what was known as the "Bain" patents. October 28, 1851, F. O. J. Smith conveyed to C. C. Wyman the "Morse" patents for the operation of a line between Boston and Rutland via

Bellows Falls, and the "Northern Telegraph Company" contracted with the Cheshire road to place a line upon their right of way between Bellows Falls and South Ashburnham. In 1853 the two ownerships existed, and the Bellows Falls operator had to understand two distinct systems, and use both Bain and Morse alphabets. This was continued at many offices as late as 1868, when the Morse system was universally adopted after the consolidation of the different companies.

Tuesday morning, August 17, 1858, when the first telegraphic information was received at Bellows Falls of the successful working the evening before of the first sub-marine cable under the Atlantic ocean, connecting the two continents, the eighth annual meeting of the Vermont Teachers' Association was in session at the Congregational church. A boy entered the meeting about ten o'clock in the morning and distributed a few copies of a Bellows Falls Times extra giving information of the event. Immediately J. S. Adams, Esq., of Burlington, arose and moved that business be suspended, that a portion of the Scripture be read, that prayer should be offered by the president of the convention, Rev. Calvin Pease, D.D., and that Old Hundred be sung in the words, "Be Thou, O God, Exalted High." These exercises, as was afterward described by Gov. Ryland Fletcher, who was present, "were performed in a very appropriate and impressive manner." Church bells were rung and many evidences of joy manifested here and in surrounding towns.

From the time that the telegraph office was first started in Bellows Falls until February 18th, 1928, it was always located in the railroad station. It was then moved into the present quarters in the Hotel Windham block, a much more satisfactory location for its commercial patrons.



## DAMS BUILT BY BEAVERS IN THIS VICINITY

Among the most interesting animals, with almost human intelligence, which the first settlers of this town found here, were the beavers. They were gathered in villages of their own, in at least two, and possibly more, localities in the town. One was just beyond Saxtons River village on the road to Westminster West. The first hill one descends in passing out of that village, near the farmhouse recently occupied by Walter W. Barry, has always been known since the town was first inhabited as "Beaver Dam Hill."

Older residents of the town as late as 40 years ago still remembered and gave interesting details of the remains of the large dam built by these industrious workmen. Many indications of the well-constructed houses of these most interesting animals are still to be seen. The dam was on the south side of the road near the foot of the hill, and by its construction the beavers had overflowed the meadow covering about 25 acres. The land is now owned by William J. Wright. The schoolhouse formerly there, which is now a part of the Barry dwelling, was always denominated on the town records and elsewhere as the "Beaver Dam Schoolhouse," and the school district always went by that name.

Another place where the remains of a beaver dam and their houses were visible within the memory of local people living only a few years ago, was upon the Hubbard Davis farm, now owned and occupied by A. Waldo Coolidge, located on high ground about two miles northeast of Saxtons River village. This pond made by these first hydraulic architects was not as large as the one

mentioned, being of only about an acre in size. It was located about 200 rods north of the farm buildings now owned by Mr. Coolidge. The signs of their work have remained longer, and more clearly visible here, than at Beaver Dam hill.

A much larger pond than either of these, made wholly by the work of beavers, was upon the New Hampshire side of the Connecticut, ten miles north of here and about three miles north of Charlestown railroad station. The railroad passes through the great meadow, which was once flooded, and the place has always been known to railroad men and others as "Beaver Meadow." The dam was on the brook that flows through the meadow, and located within a few rods of the bank of the Connecticut river. The entire meadow of many acres was overflowed, making a sizeable lake, around which the cunning workers had built their curious two-story houses, formerly observed by the river-men in passing up and down the river by boats or rafts.

The nature of these animals was shy and retiring. As soon as the vicinity became inhabited by man, they retreated, like the Indian, from the haunts of civilization. The south part of the two states being settled first, the animals were found much later in the northern sections.

## INDIAN FACES ON THE ROCKS

This section of the Connecticut Valley has few, if any, evidences of the permanent residence here of Indians before the arrival of the first settlers. Frequently stone arrow heads and mortars found show that the Indians were here temporarily, as it is known that the good fishing in this locality at certain seasons of the year called them here.

Probably the most pronounced and interesting memento of the savages, and one looked upon by thousands of curiosity seekers, has been the Indian faces cut by some unknown hands and tools on the surface of two or three large rocks just south of the west end of the toll bridge here. At the present time they are almost entirely obliterated and the curious ones are obliged to use sharp eyes, and some imagination, but within the memory of the older citizens of the present day they stood out with great distinctness. The building of the branch railroad to the paper mills from the railroad yard, about forty years ago, covered a portion of them; others have been covered by the dumping of the cinders from the boilers of the mills, and still others destroyed by the frequent blasting by river-men in improving the channel for logs. The present redevelopment of the water power does not reach quite as far north as these mementoes of early days.

An interesting account of these Indian faces is given in Hall's "History of Eastern Vermont," dated about 1848. This was accompanied by illustrations showing how these faces looked before the action of man and the elements had combined to render them less distinct. This account says:

“The picture writing of the Indians, which is to be seen in two localities in eastern Vermont, affords satisfactory evidence of the fact that certain tribes were accustomed to frequent the Connecticut and the streams connected with it, even though they were not actual residents of the pleasant banks within which those waters were confined.

“At the foot of Bellows Falls, and on the west side of the channel of the Connecticut are two rocks, on which are inscribed figures, the meaning of which it is difficult to determine. The larger rock presents a group of variously ornamented heads. The surface which these heads occupy is about six feet in height and 15 feet in breadth. Prominent among the rest is the figure occupying nearly a central position in the group. From its head, which is supported by a neck and shoulders, six rays or feathers extend, which may be regarded as emblems of excellence or power. Four of the other heads are adorned each with a pair of similar projections. On a separate rock situated a short distance from the main group, a single head is sculptured, which is finished with rays or feathers and was probably intended to designate an Indian chief. The length of the head, exclusive of the rays, is 14 inches and its breadth across the forehead in its widest part is ten inches. These sculpturings seem to have been intended to commemorate some event in which a chief and a number of his tribe performed some noted exploit or met with some disaster. The former supposition is undoubtedly the more correct. It is well known that the Indians were usually careful to conceal the traces of their misfortunes and eager to publish the evidence of their successes.

“The rocks are situated about eight rods south of the bridge for common travel across the Falls. That on which the group is pictured is during much of the time under water. The other, which is farther from the river, is not so much affected by the wash of the stream. Whenever a freshet occurs both are covered.”

The illustrations in Hall's volume showing the images on the rock, are accompanied by a cut showing a general view of the falls and toll bridge. The picture was made evidently between the time of the building of the Cheshire railroad to the other side of the river and before the bridge was built so the cars came into Bellows Falls. Only the toll bridge is shown and "a train on the Sullivan railroad is seen passing upon the other side of the river."

In his travels through the northern part of the United States in the years 1807 and 1808, "Edward Augustus Kendall, Esq., referred to the sculptures at Bellows Falls and endeavored to prove by them that the characters on the rock at Dighton, Mass. (or the "Writing Rock on Taunton River," as he designated it) were inscribed by the Indians. He gave an interesting description of the hieroglyphics comparing the similar characteristics of the two. Among other things he says, "In more than one of the heads sculptured at the Great Falls we see an exact similitude to the heads sculptured on the Writing Rock and particularly in the circumstances that a single dot or hollow is made to serve both for nose and mouth; that no ears are given to the human heads, and that the crowns of the heads are bare. Thus we ascertain that in the sculptures observed upon the Writing Rock there is the strictest similitude, in workmanship and drawing, to those observed upon the rocks at the Great Falls. Thus all questions are answered, except those that regard the nature of the tool by the edge of which the rocks have been wrought upon and the occasions upon which the figures have been wrought. With respect to the nature of the tool every difficulty

would be dismissed by supposing that the sculptures were not wrought till after the introduction of iron by the Europeans; but there appear to be good reasons for thinking them more ancient, and we shall, therefore, in all probability be compelled to believe that the tool was of no better material than stone.’’

## A BIRD'S FOOTPRINT IN ROCK AT THE FALLS

Until about the beginning of the 19th century, a natural curiosity in a rock at Bellows Falls excited interest in scientific circles of the country. Near the head of the canal, upon the point of rock extending into the Connecticut river, between the canal and the foundation of the present Sullivan railroad bridge, there was the clearly defined footprint of a huge bird of some unknown species. It was described as an exact reproduction of an exaggerated hen's track and measured five feet in length. It had an appearance like that of a bird stepping into a plastic substance, as of the rock when in its formative stage, and ever thereafter remaining as left by the imprint of the foot. It was in a particularly hard specimen of gneiss rock, which at that point was in layers of about one foot thick. For many years this curiosity attracted the interest of visitors, travelers and scientists. It was described in different publications of the day, and strangers coming here frequently requested to be guided to its location as one of the attractions of the place. About the year 1800, the faculty of Dartmouth College arranged to secure the curiosity for their museum. A time was set for the removal to Hanover of the section of stone in which it was embedded. Some unappreciative and jealous persons, learning of the plan to remove it, a day or two before the proposed visit blew the interesting specimen into fragments with powder, rather than have it taken from this vicinity.

## ENGLISH SCOUTING PARTIES IN THE CONNECTICUT VALLEY WERE PAID FOR INDIAN SCALPS

It is not generally known at the present day, and history of the past seldom makes mention of the fact, that during several years of the conflict between the Indians of this locality and the white men, bounties were offered, and paid, by the governments of both France and England for the scalps of Indians. The barbarous act of scalping by the Indians of their white victims is frequently referred to, but for a period of 13 years previous to the termination of the war between England and France in 1763 the French in Canada, by offering bounties for captives and white men's scalps, incited the natural cupidity of the St. Francis tribe to more than their usual activity in harassing the English settlers in this section of New England.

On the other hand the records of the province of Massachusetts show that in 1765 the governor of that province, with authority from King George the 2<sup>nd</sup>, offered and paid a bounty of thirty pounds, nearly \$150, for every Indian scalp. This bounty was in 1748 increased to 100 pounds, to be divided in equal parts among the officers and soldiers of any scouting party that might capture an Indian, or produce the scalp of one they had killed. The price was paid only upon the delivery of the captives or their scalps in Boston. The effect of these bounties upon both sides was to stimulate the opposing forces to deeds of the greatest cruelty and barbarity.



Scouting parties were organized and sent out by both sides to lay in ambush for the others, and secure as many scalps as possible. Authentic records are not available from the French side to show the results, but those of the English side, which were nearer to our vicinity, and so of greater interest to us, are on file now in Boston. They show that each party hunted through this territory up and down the Connecticut river for scalps of the red men. They were required to keep daily records of their marches and observations, many of them being unique and thrilling. The official records show many references to the "Great Falls" and to the "Great Mountain by ye Great Falls," referring to the falls and what is now called "Mount Kilburn" opposite this village. The mountain was an important point at which watches were kept and all movements of the enemy noted.

The main path by the falls here was upon the New Hampshire side of the river along the base of the mountain, and not upon this side of the river. The trails up the Williams river, Black river and White river, which were the principal highways to and from Lake Champlain, were frequently described in the records, and make very interesting reading to those interested in this locality. They frequently describe details of deadly encounters, resulting in great suffering, and showing great hardships endured by the scouting parties. In addition to the mountain here, the records describe experiences on Wantastiquet at Brattleboro, and Ascutney at Windsor, as being important points. They "lodged on ye top" and "viewed for smoaks" of the hostile camp fires.

The wages allowed are thus stated. "One Captain to have 25 shillings per month, one Lieutenant to have 13s. 6d. per month; One Sergeant to have 13s. 6d. per month; one Corporal 12s. per month, and 16 Centinels to have each 10s. per month; and each of the 20 men be allowed 8s. for providing themselves with provisions."

Among the voluminous records, the following is a good sample:

"Thursday. We travailed upon ye great River within two miles of ye Great Falls in said River, then we went upon Land to the Black River above ye Great Falls, went up that River and lodged about a mile and a half from the mouth of Black River, which days travail we judged was about ten miles.

"Fryday. We cross Black River at ye falls (now Springfield village) afterwards travail through ye woods N. N. W. then cross Black River again.

"Sabbath Day. Soon after we began our days work, an old pregnant squaw that travailed with us, stopt alone and was delivered of a child, and by Monday overtook us with a living child upon her back."

## THE LAST ABENAQUI CHIEF AT BELLOWS FALLS

During the period of years just previous to the coming of the white settlers in 1753 to the vicinity of what was then known as the "Great Falls," now Bellows Falls, in the Connecticut river, large numbers of the tribe of Indians known as the "Abenakis" had come here from their northern homes in the spring of each year because of the excellent fishing below and in the falls. Their stay here was only temporary, there being no history of permanent Indian settlements in this immediate vicinity.

During all the first half of the last century small parties of more civilized and peaceable Abenaki Indians used to visit Bellows Falls nearly every summer, coming from their homes in Canada and New York state. They came down the Connecticut in their canoes, usually bringing supplies of baskets and other trinkets which they had manufactured during the previous winters, which they sold to citizens of Bellows Falls and to the then large number of summer visitors. They usually encamped on Pine hill, which was north of the village and extended as far north as the residence of the late F. E. Proctor at the extreme north end of Green street. Sometimes they built their wigwams on the beach south of the falls, at times on the Vermont side, at others on the New Hampshire side. The men spent much time fishing in the river and hunting on the hills on both sides of the river, while the squaws carried on the mercantile branch of their business.

The last remnant of this tribe came to Bellows Falls early in the summer, about 1856, in their birchbark canoes. The party consisted of a chief, who was very old and infirm, a young wife and their sons, one about twenty and the other about nine years old, and others. On the occasion of this last visit they made their camp on Levi Chapin's meadow a short distance above the dam and near the mouth of "Governor's brook," where now stands a part of the village of North Walpole. They built their wigwams in true Indian fashion, of poles, covering them with bark and the skins of wild animals, and during the whole summer the place was of much interest to all in this vicinity. Residents of 25 years ago well remembered them and the interest which all took in them.

The older son spoke good English and was a manly appearing youth. He was an expert in the use of his rifle and shot gun and collected considerable money from visitors by giving exhibitions of his marksmanship. The little boy was a shy, bare-headed, bushy-haired little savage. The chief himself was very intelligent and conversed interestingly with his visitors. He had fought with the English in different wars and gave many startling incidents connected with his early life and wild mode of living. He had been to England three times and he wore a large silver medal presented to him by King George III in acknowledgment of his services. He was very proud of this, and lost no opportunity to exhibit it to his callers. It bore the king's profile in relief and an appropriate inscription.

Levi Chapin, who was at that time the principal resident of North Walpole, at one time asked if he be-

lieved that all the races of men sprang from Adam. With great dignity and deliberation as well as dramatic eloquence he pointed to Mt. Kilburn, saying, "You see yonder mountain—you find the bear there, you find the wild cat there, you find the deer there, you find the Indian there," indicating in this way his belief that the Great Spirit had created the Indian with the other wild creatures to inhabit the mountains from which the white man had driven them.

Late in the season the weather grew cold and the party prepared to return to Canada before the river was frozen over, but the old chief wished to die beside the "Great Falls," and be buried with his fathers. After long continued discussion his wife left him in his wigwam with his two sons, and went north with others of the party. The wigwam was removed to the higher ground near River Street about opposite the former location of Taylor's livery stable.

As the weather grew colder the skins with which the hut was covered gave poor shelter from the late autumn storms. Mr. Chapin and other residents took much interest in the old warrior and carried him food and bedding. Mr. Chapin arranged with the Walpole selectmen and overseer of the poor, George Huntington, to send some lumber with which to construct a suitable shelter. This, however, was never built for the night after the materials were brought the old chief died.

In his last hour he called his elder son to his side and with his finger on his wrist showed how his pulse beat slowly and unsteadily. "I'm going to the Great Spirit," he said, feebly. He gave to his son the medal and the old rifle he had carried in the wars and charged

him to wear the one and keep the other as long as he should live. Funeral services were held at the house of Levi Chapin, Rev. John M. Stow, pastor of the Congregational church at Walpole, officiating, and this last local representative of the original tribe of Abenaki Indians was buried in what was then the Rockingham Town burying-ground, now known as Restland cemetery, on the terraces in the west part of the village of Bellows Falls. No stone was erected to mark the spot, and the old representative of the proud tribe of Abenakis rests in a grave the location of which cannot be pointed out.

## EARLIEST SETTLEMENTS IN ROCKINGHAM AND SURROUNDING TOWNS

Present residents in this section of the Connecticut river valley, and especially the younger generation, are not appreciative of how comparatively young this entire section of New England is, barely 175 years since it was an almost unbroken wilderness with no white people living here. Nor is there record of any permanent habitations of Indians for many miles north or south. The beginnings of things are always interesting, and particularly early settlements.

Previous to the coming into these immediately contiguous river towns of actual and permanent settlers this had been debatable ground between the French on the north and English on the south. The last war between these two countries was declared by France against Great Britain on March 15, 1744, and the earliest beginnings of settlements in these towns were as follows:

In Westminster, which had been chartered by Massachusetts Bay province a few years earlier, Richard Ellis and his son, Reuben, 1739, built a log hut and cleared and cultivated five or six acres of land in the new township on the river meadows. In 1751, John Averill, wife and son, Asa, William Gould, wife and son, John, Amos Carpenter and wife, and Atherton Chaffee removed from Northfield, Mass., to Westminster, which was then known as "Township No. 1."

In Westmoreland on the east side of the river, in 1742 and 1743, Daniel How, Thomas Crisson and others from Rutland, Mass., made a clearing and built huts, that then being designated as "Township No. 2." The

township was regranted under the name of Westmoreland February 12, 1752, and at that time there were among the grantees about 20 residents of Northfield, although hardly any of them ever became residents of the new town.

In 1740 John Kilburn started from Weathersfield, Conn., and stopped at Northfield, Mass., until the next year, when he came to Walpole and became the first settler in that town, being named in 1753 as one of the grantees of Rockingham, with Gen. Benjamin Bellows, who, with his family, made the second settler of Walpole. John Kilburn was a noted Indian fighter and bravely defended his cabin on the meadow just south of Bellows Falls, located at Walpole.

Charleston, N. H., early known as "Fort No. 4," had as its first settlers three families by the name of Farnsworth from Lunenburg, Mass., in 1740. They were joined later by Isaac Parker from Groton, Mass., John Spafford, Capt. Phinehas Stevens and others. In 1743 they built the first corn mill, and the first saw mill in all this locality, to which for many years settlers from many miles north and south brought their corn to be ground. Capt. Stevens was many years the commander of the fort located here, which was the scene of many fierce attacks by the Indians. Commodore Sir Charles Knowles of the English navy presented to Capt. Stevens an elegant sword in honor of his victories. In 1753 the town was chartered by the name of Charlestown in honor of Sir Charles.

In Rockingham, Vt., the first settlers are recorded as coming here in 1753. They were Moses Wright, Jonathan Bigelow and Simeon Knight, at least two of them



from Northfield, Mass., but they were obliged to return within a few months through fear of the Indians and French. No others were known to have lived here until about 1760 or 1761.

A treaty of peace between England and France was signed in Paris February 10, 1763, and from that time dates the rapid settlement of all this section of the valley, and the beginning of opportunities for the blessings now enjoyed so fully after only one and three-quarters centuries.

## THE EARLIEST EVENTS OF IMPORTANCE TO BELLOWS FALLS AND VICINITY

Among the earliest things which were of interest to this town and residents of this section of the Connecticut river valley in connection with its early settlement were the following incidents:

1704, March 5.—First Protestant Christian sermon ever preached in territory which afterward became Vermont, at the mouth of Williams river in Rockingham, by Rev. John Williams, an Indian captive from Deerfield, Mass. From this the river has its name.

1735, January 15.—First charter granted to Rockingham under authority of King George II, by the Province of Massachusetts Bay to Palmer Goulding and fifty-nine others. The name of the township under this charter was “Goldenstown.”

1752, December 28.—Second charter of Rockingham, under which present titles hold, granted under authority of King George II, by the Province of New Hampshire to Samuel Johnson and fifty-eight others.

1753, March 28.—First meeting of the “grantees” or “Proprietors” of the township held.

1753, “In the Spring.”—First three settlers, Moses Wright, Jonathan Bigelow and Simeon Knight came to town. They returned to Northfield, Mass., “within a few months, driven back by the Indians.”

1760, July 17.—The proprietors voted to assist Michael Lovell in building the first saw-mill.

1761, "Last Wednesday of March."—First town meeting held. Rev. Andrew Gardner moderator and Moses Wright town clerk.

1770, March 28.—Town voted its first salary to the town minister: "Seventeen bushels of Indian corn be Delivered to the Rev'd Anderew Gardner by the Oversears out of the Rent that Nath<sup>l</sup> Davis owes the Town."

1771.—First census taken showing "225 souls" in town.

1773, August 25.—Voted to build a small meeting-house. Its size was to be thirty-five by twenty-five feet,— "till the town be able to Build a Larger."

1773, October 27.—First church in town organized, and Mr. Samuel Whiting ordained as its first pastor.

1774, December 12.—Town meeting held for the first time in the new meeting house. They had been held in taverns and private houses until this date.

1775, March 12.—"About 40 good, true men" of Rockingham marched in a body to Chester to dissuade Judge Chandler from holding court in Westminster the following Tuesday.

1775, March 13.—From sixty-five to one hundred Rockingham citizens marched to Westminster and took part in the "Westminster Massacre."

1785.—First toll bridge across the Connecticut river built by Col. Enoch Hale. It was the only bridge across the river at any point until 1796.

1791.—Second census of the town taken, showing 1235 inhabitants.

1792.—Work upon the building of the Bellows Falls Canal commenced. It was chartered the year before. It was finished in August, 1802.

1798.—The second church in town (Immanuel) organized. It held its services in the present old meeting-house in Rockingham village until 1816, when it was moved to Bellows Falls, and the same organization is functioning today.

1801, January 1.—First post office in town established at Rockingham village, with "Roswald" Bellows as postmaster.

1801, April 1.—First post office established at Bellows Falls, with Dr. William Page, postmaster. He was one of the two charter members of the Bellows Falls Canal Co., and Great-grandfather of the late Governor Page of Rutland

1802.—First paper mill in Bellows Falls established by Bill Blake. He built one in Alstead, N. H., three years earlier.

1809, February 4.—Rev. Samuel Whiting, first town minister resigned after thirty-six years of service.

1812, May 12.—First great conflagration in Bellows Falls, with a loss exceeding \$40,000.

1817, January 1.—First newspaper established in Bellows Falls, "Vermont Intelligencer and Bellows Falls Advertiser," owned by Bill Blake & Co., edited by Thomas Green Fessenden.

1817, February 16.—First Masonic meeting held in town.

1819.—First church bell in town presented by Gen. Amasa Allen to Immanuel church, and the village of Bellows Falls, the same in use now, cast by Paul Revere & Sons.

1824.—There were only 58 buildings of all kinds in Bellows Falls and North Walpole, including barns and out-houses.

## COURT HOUSE AND JAIL AT CHESTER FOR CUMBERLAND COUNTY

In the neighboring village of Chester, in the section known as "Factoryville," stands a small stone marker near the residence of F. P. Burbank which indicates the location of the first court house and jail erected in what in later years became the State of Vermont. The circumstances of its being built, and its use, form a most interesting story of the primitive conditions surrounding the lives of the earliest settlers in this region. The spot was not marked until 1909, but the location of the building has always been a matter of record.

Previous to 1765 the few straggling settlers that had come to this section of New England had been obliged to go to Albany, N. Y., about 150 miles distant, for all court matters, which with the lack of roads was a serious matter. Early in that year a petition was made to Governor Colden of New York for the establishment of counties in the territory between the provinces of New York and New Hampshire. In 1766 the Provincial Legislature of New York erected a county comprising nearly the same territory now contained in the counties of Windham and Orange. They named it Cumberland County, and it was the first county to be formed in the territory which afterward became the State of Vermont. It was probably named for Prince William, the Duke of Cumberland, who in 1746 met with distinguished success in opposing the rebels in Scotland. The shire town of this new county was located at New Flamstead, the name later changed to Chester.

One of the principal reasons for the location of the shire at Chester was that Thomas Chandler, who was

a man of large means in those early days and resided there, made the offer that he would "at his own expense build a good and sufficient court house and jail." Four years later, in 1770, it was described as being in the corner of a dwelling house built of small poles notched together at the corners similar to log houses. The corner considered as the jail was built as a palisade with upright poles six inches in diameter resting on the lower floor and reaching to the chamber floor, pegged up with wooden pegs. The whole side could be easily thrown over and the prisoners freed. In this early jail at Chester there is record of but one prisoner being confined for any length of time, and he stayed there of his own volition because the man who had brought suit against him, and thus caused his confinement, "had used him with great tenderness and should not be made blameable for his escape."

In 1770 the inhabitants of Chester raised money by subscription, the unique document reading as follows: "June 16th—To Encourage the finishing of the Gaol now begun in Chester, we the subscribers will pay to such person or persons as Thomas Chandler, Thomas Chandler, Jr., Esquires, and Mr. John Grout, who shall employ labor or provide materials, the sums against our names written,—witness our hands,—Joseph Wood, one bushel of corn. William Dean two Bushels of wheat delivered at Rockingham at the last day of August." Judge Chandler then began the erection of a second building to be used for both court house and jail. The next year he complained that no one had paid in anything on his subscription, but he had built the second jail. This second jail was built of hemlock logs 20 inches

in diameter. Owing to the scarcity of nails, which were not manufactured by the colonies, the roof could not be completed and the new jail was left unfinished. In the meantime the old jail had been accepted by the court although it was questioned whether it would hold a prisoner who really wanted to get his liberty. Judge Chandler had the old jail repaired, the sides strengthened, and, at right angles with the logs which formed the main body of the house, other logs were pinned.

Early in 1771 the inhabitants of Cumberland county, especially those on the Connecticut river, began a strong movement to get the shire removed to Westminster as being a locality more accessible. To prevent this Judge Chandler proceeded to build a court house and jail at his own expense. It was "thirty feet long, sixteen feet wide and eleven feet posts." Besides the court room, there was recorded a "sufficient lobby, or room fit for a jury, with a fire place in it." This building was leased to the county by Judge Chandler for a period of ten years, and as much longer as the county might want it.

In spite of having the use of these "commodious" quarters the people continued the effort to get the shire removed to Westminster, and these efforts were successful. Supervisors were elected in each town in the county, who met in Chester on May 26, 1772, and selected Westminster as the shire town, designating the exact location for the court house and jail, which were built and first occupied in 1773. Its cost was limited to two hundred and fifty pounds, raised by tax upon the whole county.

This Westminster court house and jail were destined to become the scenes of many of the important events which occurred during the Revolution and the formation of the State of Vermont.



## WESTMINSTER, ONE OF VERMONT'S MOST HISTORIC TOWNS—THE MASSACRE THERE

The village of Westminster, Vt., located four miles south of Bellows Falls, is one of the most delightful and historic of the villages of this section of the Connecticut river valley. Located upon one of the higher river terraces, which are so common in the course of the winding river, it can be seen from long distances as one goes through the valley either by train or by automobile.

The village has what is termed an "upper" and a "lower" street. The most northerly is located upon the meadow level and called the upper, while the southerly end although upon a much higher terrace is denominated the lower street, because it is down the river and south. From the north to the south end of these main streets the distance is nearly two miles. The terrace formations here are continuations of those which are so prominent at Bellows Falls. The heights of the terraces at Westminster correspond with those on the opposite side of the river in the town of Walpole, N. H., and they are four in number. The lowest extends along the river bank twenty-four feet above the river bed, and forms the broad alluvial plain crossed by the upper street. The second, ninety feet above the river's bed, extends about a mile each way, being narrowed somewhat at the lower end, and is crossed by the lower street, the central part of the village. The third and fourth are visible on the western elevations and above the village.

This is all historic ground. Located in this broad and beautiful valley of the Connecticut, and girded by a semi-circle of rounded hills that, with those on the New

Hampshire side, forms a natural amphitheatre, is the stage on which was played the first act in the drama of the Revolution. On the northerly end of the lower street, on the brow of the terrace overlooking the upper street, occurred the first organized resistance to the oppression of King George's tyrannical courts, and here was shed the first blood of the Revolution, March 13, 1775. The story has often been told, how a few determined men met there and took possession of the court house, to prevent the session of next day's court, and they were attacked by the officers of the court and one man killed and another fatally injured. The attempt of the sturdy citizens was successful, for the session of court was not held, nor was it ever held again in this county under the rule of the king.

Today, as the visitor passes down the rural upper street of the village, he can see on the west side of the highway the site of the farm home of Capt. Azariah Wright, the eccentric old patriot at whose house the Liberty men met, and after organizing they there armed themselves with sticks of wood from his capacious wood pile, in the absence of more effective weapons. Also the site of the old "Tory Tavern," which was the headquarters of the court officials at that time, and the cellar hole which marks the site of the home of Gen. Stephen R. Bradley, where Ethan Allen wooed and wedded his second wife.

Ascending the abrupt hill to the terrace, upon which the lower street is located, on the left is the site of the old court house, the storm center of those early days, in which, in addition to the massacre of March 13, 1775, were later held many of the exciting meetings and con-

ventions that resulted in the formation of the State of Vermont. Across the street in the quiet cemetery repose the remains of the two martyrs, William French and Daniel Houghton. The Vermont legislature, in 1873, authorized the erection of a handsome monument, with tablets commemorating the event.

Within a stone's throw of the cemetery is the site of the home of Crean Brush, the noted Tory, and, at the street corner the old mansion and office building of Hon. William C. Bradley, who was a Vermont senator in Congress in 1812, when the British partially burned the capitol building, and an important part of the city itself. A little further south was the old "Whig Tavern" of John Gould, which was standing only a few years ago.

On the terraces west of, and high above, the lower street today stand the extensive buildings of the Kurn Hattin Homes, which for nearly a half century have exercised a most beneficial influence over homeless boys, and are today caring for about 100 of them. Near the railroad station on the lower street is now one of the largest canning factories in New England, that of the Baxter Brothers. The town itself is largely devoted to the farming industry.

## FIRST PRINTING PRESS AND FIRST NEWSPAPER IN VERMONT WAS AT WESTMINSTER

Among the historic incidents for which the town of Westminster is noted is that of being the location of the first printing office, and of the first newspaper printed in the New Hampshire Grants, which afterward became the State of Vermont. The location of the office is said to have been in the old court house on the brow of the hill where the first blood of the Revolution had been shed six years before.

The identical press, made of wood, is now among the most treasured of the relics of early times in the collection of the Vermont Historical Society at Montpelier. It is known as the "Daye Press." It was brought from England by Stephen Daye in 1638 and set up by the owner in Cambridge, Mass., for the purpose of establishing the business of printing. Its first production was a broadside of the "Freeman's Oath," then an almanac in which the calculations were made for the first time for New England, and in due course an Indian Bible was issued from it. Daye carried on the printing in Cambridge until 1649, when the press and office came into the possession of Samuel Green and Marinadalle Johnson. The press came into the possession of Harvard College in 1656. In 1714 it became the property of Timothy Green and he took it to New London, Conn., and later it was set up in Norwich, Conn., by Alden Spooner. It was next moved to Dresden, now Hanover, N. H., and various pamphlets and other publications bear the imprint there in 1779.

The year 1781 saw the removal of the press to Westminster. Here the British-made press was set up to proclaim liberty and independence for the American people in the issues of the first Vermont newspaper, "The Vermont Gazette, or Green Mountain Post Boy." which stated in its heading "Pliant as Reeds, where Streams of Freedom Glide; Firm as the Hills to Stem Oppression's Tide; Printed by Judah Paddock Spooner and Timothy Green." It was a weekly paper, the first issue being February 12, 1781. Only one copy of the paper is known to exist, now deposited in the museum of the Vermont Historical Society at Montpelier, beside the old press upon which it was struck off by hand so many years ago. The paper maintained a precarious existence for only two years, suspending publication in 1783. It is especially notable and appropriate that the year of the establishment of this newspaper at Westminster was the year which signaled the suspension of hostilities between England and the United States.

The second newspaper printed in Vermont was the "Vermont Gazette or Freeman's Depository," founded by Anthony Haswell at Bennington, started June 5th, 1783. The paper was published under different names and by different persons until 1853, when that also ceased publication.

Soon after the suspension of the first paper in Westminster, George Hough purchased the press and type of Green & Spooner, and removed them to Windsor. Here on August 7, 1783, George Hough and Alden Spooner commenced the publication of the third newspaper in the state, "The Vermont Journal and the Universal Advertiser." A copy of the first issue, Vol. 1, No.

1, is in the possession of the Vermont Historical Society.

In the score of years between 1780 and 1800 fifteen newspapers were founded in Vermont. One had been established in 1781, two in 1783, one in 1791, one in 1792, one in 1793, two in 1794, one in 1795, four in 1797, and two in 1798. The population of the state had meanwhile increased from 81,000 to 157,000, but only five of the papers were in existence when the new century opened, out of the fifteen established, the other ten journals having suspended publication.

The inhabitants of the town of Westminster take much pride, in addition to their many other reasons, in the fact of the town being the pioneer in a business which has grown to such large proportions, and in its having the first printing press in this state, and from it was issued the first newspaper. At the present time there are nine daily papers and 64 weekly papers published in Vermont, besides a number of semi-monthly and monthly publications.

## ETHAN ALLEN'S MARRIAGE AT WESTMINSTER

Westminster, our nearest neighboring town on the south, has a wealth of history of which only fragments have been gathered as yet, but if its different important events occurring there could be gathered into one volume it would rank among the most important towns in Vermont. It being the county seat during the greater part of the period when Vermont was an independent republic; the first blood of the Revolution having been shed there; it having the location of the first printing press and first newspaper in Vermont, are important points of its history, but it was also the location of one of the most sudden, noted and romantic marriages occurring in the state in those early days, one of the contracting parties being no less a personage than General Ethan Allen.

Delving into authorities, and studying the various traditions still held as reliable by present residents who are descendants of those hardy settlers of a century and a half ago, has resulted in a fairly accurate account of this occurrence. Allen's activities in connection with the Green Mountain Boys on both sides of the mountain called him often into Westminster, as well as other towns on the east side. His residence was in Arlington on the west side, and he was a widower.

One day Frances Buchanan, widow of Captain Buchanan of New York City, and her mother, Mrs. Wall, arrived in Westminster. Mrs. Buchanan was a domineering woman and early attracted the attention of the townspeople, to whom a bearing as imperious as hers was something new. During one of his frequent

visits to Westminster General Allen formed an acquaintance with Mrs. Buchanan, which subsequently ripened into a warm, and for a time singularly intermittent friendship. She was pleased with the originality of his views and conversation, flattered at her ability to arrest the attention of a man whom all feared, but few loved, and imagined that she could find more sympathy in the companionship of his strong, active nature than in the society of the plodding people by whom she was surrounded. Mrs. Buchanan found herself, on some occasions, irresistibly attracted toward the man, while at other times his rough manner would render him equally repulsive to her.

Aware of the feeling with which she regarded the general and hoping to influence her to effect an alliance with a man in whom boundless ambition was at all times apparent, save when overshadowed by passions as violent as they were unrebuked, John Norton, the tavern keeper at Westminster, said to her one day, "Fanny, if you should marry Gen. Allen you will be the queen of a new state." "Yes," she snapped back, "if I should marry the devil I should be the queen of hell." Her aversion to the leading man of the state disappeared at length and she consented to become his wife. The circumstances attendant upon the marriage, which occurred previous to 1784, were characteristic of the man, who cared but little for "forms of government," or for the social customs of life.

Gen. Stephen R. Bradley had built a convenient dwelling house in Westminster, the same still standing there, and during the sessions of Court, the Supreme Judges were his guests. Mrs. Wall and the handsome



Mrs. Buchanan also had rooms there. Gen. Allen was a frequent visitor.

One morning while Gen. Bradley and his guests, the Supreme Judges, were at breakfast, Gen. Allen appeared at the gate with sleigh, horse and driver. He was invited to enter and break his fast. He replied that he had eaten at Norton's Tavern and that while the others were engaged he would step into Mrs. Wall's apartment and see the ladies. He entered the apartment without ceremony and found Mrs. Buchanan in a morning gown. After a little conversation he said to her, "I am here to be married, now is the time, for I am on my way to Arlington." "Very well," she replied, "but give me time to put on my Joseph."

Meanwhile the judges and their host had finished their breakfast and were smoking their long pipes. While they were thus engaged, the couple came in and Gen. Allen, walking up to his old friend, Chief Justice Moses Robinson, addressed him: "Judge, this young woman and myself have concluded to marry each other and to have you perform the ceremony." The surprised judge asked him when. "Now," replied Allen; "for myself, I have no great opinion of such formality and, from what I can discover, she thinks as little of it as I do. But as a decent respect for the opinions of mankind seems to require it you will proceed." The Judge asked him if he had given the matter serious consideration.

"Certainly," replied Allen, "but," glancing at Mrs. Buchanan, "I do not think it requires much consideration." The ceremony then proceeded until the judge inquired of the General whether he promised to

live with Frances “agreeable to the laws of God.” “Stop! stop!” cried Allen at this point. Then pausing and looking out of the window, the pantheist exclaimed, “The law of God as written in the great book of nature! Yes! Go on!”

The judge continued and when he had finished, the trunk and guitar case of Mrs. Allen were placed in the sleigh, the parties took their leave and were driven to the general’s home in Arlington.

General Allen died Feb. 12, 1798, and his widow subsequently married Dr. Jabez Penniman of Burlington.

## WINDHAM COUNTY REBELLION — ETHAN ALLEN ISSUES HIS NOTED PROCLAMATION

How many of the present-day Vermonters ever heard of the Windham County Rebellion? Early Vermont history devotes but little space to it, and more modern history less, but the story is an interesting one, when its different phases are linked together and rescued from oblivion.

It was among the last of those stirring events in the struggle between Vermont as an independent republic, and New York as one of the states of the Union. In this county, as in most of the other counties of the state, there were two parties, one being loyal to Vermont while the other gave fealty to New York. Since the close of the war of the Revolution the government of New York had sought every opportunity to embarrass the newly formed government of Vermont. The center of this opposition was in the town of Guilford, then the most populous town in Vermont. Here was the most active opposition to the collection of taxes and the levying of troops by the Vermont government, as a majority of the citizens were favorable to New York, and so denominated as "tories."

The adherents of New York who were drafted refused to serve and the Sheriff of Windham county was directed to seize their goods and chattels to the amount expended by the state in hiring their substitutes. When the officer attempted to execute the warrant a cow which he had seized was taken from him by a mob acting under a Captain Phelps, commissioned by New York. In levying on the property of Timothy Church of

Brattleboro, the sheriff was resisted by Church's friends. Being unable to execute his warrant the sheriff asked for a military force to assist him, whereupon by advice of the Vermont council Governor Chittenden ordered Brigadier General Ethan Allen to "raise 250 men to support the civil authority," and it was not many days before Gen. Allen started from Bennington with 100 Green Mountain Boys and marched across the mountains into the rebellious region.

Upon Allen's approach Phelps in a loud voice announced himself as the high sheriff of Cumberland county, as the territory was known as a division of New York state, and bade Allen go about his business; denounced his conduct and that of his men as rioters and ordered the military to disperse. With his traditional roughness Allen knocked the hat from the head of the doughty sheriff and ordered his men to "take the d——d rascal off," galloping away to superintend the operations of his forces. Since that morning the numbers of the Vermonters had been augmented by the militia forces under command of Col. Stephen R. Bradley of Westminster, and detachments from other towns, making a force of over 400 men. Allen made several arrests and met with no serious resistance until, while marching toward Brattleboro, they were fired upon by about 50 Guilfordites in ambush. Allen at once marched his men back to Guilford. On reaching that town he made the historic proclamation, "I, Ethan Allen, do declare that I will give no quarter to the man, woman, or child who shall oppose me, and unless the inhabitants of Guilford peaceably submit to the authority of Vermont, I swear that I will lay it as desolate as Sodom and Gomorrah, by

God.” It has always been a mooted question whether the comma should be placed before the last two words or not, making a material difference in the expression, but the well known habits of the old warrior tend toward the validity of the comma.

Without further molestation the General conveyed his prisoners, more than 20 in all, to Westminster and lodged them in jail. When brought to trial fines were imposed on the lesser offenders, while four of the principal ones were banished from Vermont, not to return under pain of death, and their estates were forfeited to the state.

During this disturbance the militia of the West Parish of Westminster, although regularly organized, were for some time in doubt what course to take. True to the cause of Vermont, they were still unwilling to assist in hostilities against their neighbors who differed from them on the question of jurisdiction. On the morning of Tuesday, the 10th of June, 1784, although their captain, Deacon Ephraim Ranney, refused to lead them, they concluded to wait on Gen. Allen, and with this intention started for Brattleboro, when “in the edge of Dummerston” they met him and his forces. Turning about they joined his retinue and accompanied him to Westminster with his prisoners.

During the next winter things became still more serious, and on the night of January 17th a party of Yorkers from Guilford attacked the inn of Joseph Arms in Brattleboro, which was the quarters of several officers under the government of Vermont. The Yorkers demanded the immediate surrender of Constable Waters, who, they claimed, had been guilty of extorting taxes

from persons professing allegiance to New York, and Waters surrendered. This being reported to the Vermont officials the next day, the 18th, Col. S. R. Bradley at the head of 200 troops from Westminster and vicinity, including the renowned old Azariah Wright and a company from Rockingham under Captain John Fuller, marched for the purpose of enforcing collections, and when he reached Brattleboro he had a force of over 300. Snow had begun to fall and when the troops resumed their march it was necessary to use snow shoes. As the little army advanced a violent southwester greatly increased the unpleasantness of the undertaking.

On the morning of Tuesday, the 20th, hostilities again began at Guilford, but the Yorkers were dispersed without much resistance, several of their leaders being taken to Westminster and punished by fine, whipping and pillory. At numerous times during the remainder of that winter and spring collisions occurred between the two factions, and on March 5th another skirmish occurred in which several Yorkers and Vermonters were injured. Before the close of the year the Yorkers found their property mostly confiscated and themselves so harshly handled by the civil and military authority of Vermont that they either took the oath of allegiance to the state or abandoned the locality entirely, many going into New York state and settling on public lands of that state.

One authority says: "During the sessions of the court Westminster had presented more the appearance of a military encampment than of a peaceful village. With the departure of the dignitaries of the bench, the lawyers at the bar, and the prisoners at the dock, it again

assumed its wonted aspect, and the roll of the drum and shrill notes of the fife gave place to the music of the sleigh bells of winter, and left to their jingling notes the monopoly of noise for the rest of the season.”

During the next seven or eight years the collisions between these two factions in the county were frequent. Congress vacillated upon the question of admitting Vermont into the Union of States. Col. Stephen R. Bradley of Westminster and Gen. Ethan Allen each prepared proclamations defending the policy of the Vermonters, which were freely circulated in the army, and Gov. Chittenden reminded Congress of its solemn engagements to Vermont, but the sturdy inhabitants maintained their independence until 1791. Then the commissioners of the two states meeting together agreed upon the sum of \$30,000 to be paid to New York as an indemnity for all claims and titles granted previously by the state of New York in the disputed territory, and Vermont was admitted “as a new and entire member of the United States of America” on March 4th, 1791.

## MILITARY MATTERS OF BELLOWS FALLS AND ROCKINGHAM—A COMPANY IN 1770

Bellows Falls and the Town of Rockingham have usually had a leading part in military matters since the township was first organized.

As early as 1770 there was a military company in Rockingham whose officers were Captain Stephen Sargeant, Lieutenant Philip Safford, and Surgeon Dr. Reuben Jones, the town physician. Lt. Safford in later years made a creditable record as a leader at the Westminster Massacre, and Dr. Jones was one of the six leading men during all the complications leading to the organizing of the State of Vermont.

The Rockingham Company, which marched across the state to Ticonderoga and took part in the Battle of Hubbardton in July, 1777, was officered as follows: Captain Joseph Woods, Lieut. Charles Richards, Lieut. Colburn Preston and Ensign Ebenezer Fuller. The Company, comprising thirty-four men, probably took part in the Battle of Bennington a month later under the same officers.

In October, 1777, a detachment from Rockingham under Lieut. Charles Richards is supposed to have taken part in the Saratoga campaign and to have been present at Burgoyne's surrender. The New York records of 1778 show that during the time when Vermont was temporarily under the government of New York, the Rockingham Company was officered by Moses Wright, Captain; Isaac Reed, First Lieutenant; and Ashur Evans, Ensign. In October, 1780, the roster of the Rockingham militia showed the names of twenty-nine men with Cap-



tain Jonathan Houghton as Captain. In October of 1782, the Rockingham Company of twenty-three men was under command of Captain William Simonds and took part in quelling the insurrection in Guilford, Vt. In January, 1784, the Rockingham militia, to the number of twenty-two men, commanded by Captain John Fuller, marched across the mountains in a blinding snow storm to Guilford and shared honors with the little army of Ethan Allen in his victory over the Tories of that town.

In 1822 there was a Company of "Light Infantry" in the village of Saxtons River, and the commission of the Governor to Warren Lovell as Lieutenant was dated June 10, 1822. Lieut. Lovell was but twenty years old at the time and the next year he was appointed postmaster of Saxtons River. In 1813 the Vermont Legislature by a special act constituted a Company of Artillery from this town, probably located in Rockingham village. It was annexed to the 1st Regiment, 2nd Brigade and chief Division of the militia of the state. The persons constituting the Company were required to "furnish themselves with, at their own expense, a good field piece, suitable apparatus, and otherwise equip themselves as a Company of Artillery," a somewhat different requirement regarding equipment from what later years have seen. In September, 1822, there was a Company of Light Infantry and one of Artillery composed of Bellows Falls citizens, and two Infantry Companies in Grafton.

September 29, 1826, the First Regiment, under command of Col. White, was mustered in Bellows Falls and the Rockingham Company was commanded by Captain

Seaver. There were also cavalry and artillery attached to the regiment. The Light Infantry Company from Putney under Captain Knights arrived here during the evening with baggage wagons, camp equipage, etc., and encamped upon the hill near Immanuel church. They had nine tents, and about midnight some practical jokers passed a large rope around all the tents and down the hill toward Rockingham Street, for the purpose of dragging them down the declivity. The rope was, however, discovered by a guard just as a pair of horses, as a propelling power, was being attached to the Rockingham Street end, and the object of the perpetrators was frustrated. Friday, the usual drill, review and inspection of the regiment took place and a sham fight furnished entertainment and instruction for the afternoon. September 14 and 15, 1835, the officers of the 20th Regiment under the command of Col. Clay "trained" in Bellows Falls, and Col. Ryland Fletcher of Cavendish, later Governor of Vermont, made a ringing speech to the organizations. In September, 1841, the Light Infantry Companies of Keene and Westmoreland visited Bellows Falls and paraded our streets. They were handsomely entertained by the local military men.

Early in the '50s, Bellows Falls had a crack Company composed of prominent citizens known as the "Green Mountain Guards." They were organized under the laws of the State and were among the first troops to have uniforms and equipments. The militia of the State previous to this system had been known as the "Flood Wood Militia" because each member of the various companies was compelled to furnish his own clothing, arms, and equipment. Many of the members of the com-

panies, being poor in this world's goods, could not afford a uniform and often could not procure a gun of any kind. The arms-bearing citizens of the state, however, had been required to turn out for military duty at least one day in the year, and the great variety of dress worn, as well as the imitations of guns used, made them a somewhat motley and non-military appearing body of soldiers. Often there were men in the ranks who trained with only sticks, pitch-forks, hoes or any other handy implement in the place of guns, and from this originated the title "Flood Wood." With the advent of a new law, under which the state bore a portion of the expense of equipment, the "Green Mountain Guards" were organized, and became a popular local institution. In their name many social functions were observed, the memory of which yet remains with some of the older citizens.

In 1858, the officers of this organization were W. W. Cochran, captain; E. P. Cook, 1st lieutenant; Solon Perry, 2d lieutenant. The uniform was of dark blue with scarlet facings, and is said to have been very attractive in appearance.

At the first general muster of what was then known as the "Uniformed Militia of Vermont," held at Brandon, Wednesday and Thursday, November 1st and 2d, 1858, the Green Mountain Guards mustered "40 muskets," the largest number of any of the nine companies present. They were accompanied by the Bellows Falls band of seventeen pieces, in showy uniforms of light blue, with high bear-skin caps.

The Rockingham Company took part in the muster of the 2d Regiment in 1859, mustering "70 guns," a much larger number than any other Company present.

December 31, 1864, Company E, of the 12th Regiment, 3rd Brigade of Vermont Militia, was organized in the law office of J. D. Bridgman and for two years, during the Civil War, was an acting organization here. Its last appearance was on the occasion of its annual parade and drill, Tuesday, June 9, 1866, and for forty years thereafter Bellows Falls had no well organized militia company.

In January, 1906, the young men of Bellows Falls became interested in military matters and there being a vacancy in the one regiment of state militia, application was made for establishment of a Company here, which was granted. Its designation was "Company E of the 1st Regiment Infantry, Vermont National Guard." The first officers were Captain George H. Thompson, First Lieutenant Dallas F. Pollard, Second Lieutenant John P. Lawrence, First Sergeant John C. Dennison. From that time until the present, Bellows Falls has had a Company, always known as "Company E." The state erected here a well equipped armory in 1914, and this Company has since been an active factor in the military and social activities of the town.

INTERESTING MILITIA RECORDS OF  
CHESTERFIELD, N. H.

A most interesting record book came to light a short time ago in the Connecticut river valley town of Chesterfield, N. H., a few miles south of here, throwing light upon the practices and make-up of the military arm of that state nearly a century ago. It was the "Orderly Book of the 5th Company of the 6th Regiment, New Hampshire Militia," the title page indicating that it was the "Property of the State," although it had never been placed among the archives, as probably should have been done. It was found in the attic of the Stone House Tavern in that town, of which the proprietor, Paschal Converse, was the company clerk during a large part of the years covered by the records, viz., 1841 to 1849. The book is well preserved and contains among the officers and men the names of a large part of the citizenship of those days in that town. The building in which it was found is one of the oldest in the town, now used as a summer hotel, and the owner in the '40s was the clerk who kept the records of the company a part of the time, Paschal Converse. The company was in the 5th Brigade and 3rd Division of the New Hampshire militia.

The first entry in the book is "This Certifies that I Paschal Converse was appointed clerk of said company on Friday the 17th day of September, 1841, and took the oath of allegiance and of office Sept. 17th, 1841.

Paschal Converse, Clerk.

A True copy, Attest."

\* \* \* \* \*

“State of New Hampshire,—To Capt. Willard C. Black,—Sir—your here by notified and warned to appear with your subalterns at the inn of Celatin Farr in Chesterfield on thursday the 16 day of September next at 9 O'clock A. M. in uniform and with Musket Bayonet Sword and Belt as the law requires for to Drill and there wait further orders. Your are also here by notified and warned to appear with your company on the Common near the Baptis Meetinghouse in Swansey on Wednesday the 29th day of September next at 6 O'clock A. M. completely armed and Equiped as the law requires for military inspection and Review and there wait further orders.

Dated at Chesterfield aug the 30th 1841—

By order of Col. E. P. Pierce, Jr., of the 6 Reg.

M. H. Day adgeotent of the 6 Reg

Attest Paschal Converse Clerk.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“New Hampshire Militia

“To Burnam Royce Private in the 5th Co. 6th Reg. you are hereby ordered and directed to notify and warn as the law requires all non commissioned officers and privates whose names are here to annexed in the company under my command to appear on parade near P Convers inn in Chesterfield on Tuesday the 24th day of September at one O'clock in the P. M. noon allso at the Baptis Meetinghouse in Swansey the 29th day of September at six O'clock A. M. noon with armes and equipments required by law for military duty Thereof fail not and make due return of your doings herein on or before the day of appearance,—Dated at Chesterfield this 17th day of September Anno Domini 1841—

“W. C. Black, Captain or Commanding officer of said Company. Paschal Converse—Russel Farr Jr.—Celatin Farr—Preston Sterns—George L. Fullam—Squire Smith—John B. Fisk—Norman Smith—George

Darling—Thomas Dunham—Elijah Hubbard—Charles Davis—Isiah Higgins—Bradley Prentiss—Newell Colburn—Daniel Presho—Mark Cook—Alanson Chamberlin—Chandler A. Cressey—George Chamberlin—George Wheeler—Samuel Chamberlin Jr.—Seth Willington—John L. Pierce—Broughton Davis—Wm. Smith—Asa Smith—Horace Harvey—Warren Hildreth—Croyden Sargent—Arad H. Fletcher—Ephriam Amadon—John Davis—Lyman Royce—George Norcross—Gilman Darling—Samuel Norcross—Holsey Fletcher.”

The above probably includes a large proportion of the able-bodied men of the town at that time, and the names are familiar ones of present-day families there.

The inspection return of this “training” shows they had present “1 Captain—1 Lieutenant—1 Ensign—1 Segants—2 Musicians—56 Privates—Present 24—Absent 32—Total including Officers 62—Muskets 23—Bayonets 23—Iron ramrods 24—Scabbards & Belts 24 Cartridge Boxes 24—Priming Wires & Brushes 24—Spare Flints 72—Knapsacks 24—Canteens 24—Drums 1—Fifes 1.”

The surgeon of the company was C. C. Wheaton, and his certificates of the causes for exemption from military duty, of which there are many, are somewhat amusing, as shown by the following examples:

“New Hampshire Militia

“This may certify that George Fletcher complains of weakness across his kidneys of some three years standing if so he should be exempt from performing military duty for one year.

C. C. Wheaton, Surg

Recorded March 21st, 1842.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“This certifies to all whom it may concern that James F. Robertson is incapable of performing military

duty from an affection of the heart and liver as well as other troubles about the system which will probably be of long continuance. Therefore I consider him legally excused from the further performance of said duty for one year from date.

John O. French M. D.

Moses Dudley } Selectmen of  
Arad Fletcher } Chesterfield

April 16th, 1849.”

The orders issued for training, warning of members, amount of the equipment inventory, exemptions from duty, of which the above are samples, are all carefully recorded in detail as shown above and grew to be a sizable book of over 150 pages during the nine years they cover.



## ROCKINGHAM COMPANIES WHICH TOOK PART IN BATTLES OF THE REVOLUTION

The records of the towns of Rockingham, Vermont, and Charlestown and Walpole, in New Hampshire, furnish some interesting accounts of the part which the inhabitants of this section of the Connecticut river valley took in the events which preceded the Battle of Bennington on August 16th, 1777.

The main army of Burgoyne in January of that year had reached the upper Hudson, driving all before it. The alarm of the threatened invasion reached Rockingham by horseback riders the middle of June and hurried meetings were held. Arrangements were made for raising a company here to assist in defending the New England Colonies. The company of men was quickly raised, and under command of Captain Joseph Wood started out upon their long and tedious march across the mountains. The exact date of their departure cannot be ascertained but it must have been after June 23rd, as a portion of the men whose names are recorded as having "marched" are included in the list of those who took the oath of fidelity to the United States on that day, before William Simonds, the Town Clerk. It is probable they left within the next few days, and possibly all took the advice of Colonel Warner and left "a few hills of corn unhoed," as it was the time of year when hoeing corn was the duty of the farmers.

The records are silent as to whether this company reached Ticonderoga previous to its evacuation, July 5th, and whether they took part in the battle of Hubbardton, July 7th, with the regular United States army,

or not. It is, however, safe to assume that they were at both places and later took part in the Battle of Bennington.

The records show the complete list of this company as those who "marched to Ticonderoga" and the amount of powder and lead furnished to each. It aggregated 21 pounds of powder and 30 pounds of lead. A list of the company that "marched to Manchester" with powder and lead is also given.

Following the events in the progress of the campaign, the evacuation of Ticonderoga and the battle of Hubbardton, in which another company of Rockingham men were shown to have taken part, the Vermont Council of Safety, July 7, 1777, issued a call to all officers of militia to send on all men to Manchester that they could possibly raise. They were there to meet the gathering remnants of Col. Warner's forces that had been ordered to "take to the woods and meet him at Manchester."

This call for assistance, as well as the terrifying reports from Ticonderoga and Hubbardton, brought by those returning from there, greatly excited the settlers of all towns on both sides of the Connecticut river. The British general had made public his purpose to cross the mountains by the old military road to Charlestown, and to continue as far south as Brattleboro, in order to separate the Colonies and cut off their communications with one another.

Excitement ran high in Rockingham and Walpole, and particularly in Charlestown, where the military headquarters of this vicinity was, at the fort known as "No. Four." Colonel Benjamin Bellows of Walpole, who

had been with the expedition to Ticonderoga, but had returned to Walpole on account of the illness of his father, Col. Bellows, Sr., wrote as follows to the New Hampshire Committee of Safety, under date of July 13th, 1777:

“Gentlemen:—

“You no doubt heard of the disaster we have met with at the westward; so shall not undertake to give you the Particulars, but to sum it up in short; we have lost all our Stores and Baggage, with some of our men, the number I am unable to ascertain. I shall represent to you something of the distressing situation of our Frontiers, especially of persons who are easily intimidated as well as women and children, and it is my humble opinion if some resolutions are not adopted and speedily put into Execution the People’s hearts will fail and conclude it is a gone case; and this part of the country will be deserted, I fear, and left without anybody to receive Hay or Grain &c. I submit to Superior Wisdom, as to the best manner to prevent these evils we dread, and hope that the most strenuous efforts will be made by the Government at this most critical time; and as the Inhabitants on the other side of the River in New York State (now the State of Vermont) would try to keep their ground, if they could in some measure be supported, if we could lend them any assistance, it would answer as good a purpose as tho’ done to ourselves, as there must be a Frontier; the people on Otter Creek have many of them moved off already.

“Should think it best to keep out the frontier in New York State (Vermont) if possible. By the best information I can get there is not short of six or seven hundred men above this place on York side of the River that are destitute of fire arms; if there could be found out any way to supply them it would answer a good purpose. I must further inform you that when we retreated from Ticonderoga, that many of the Continental Troops,

instead of following the army, steered for their homes.

“I am, Gentlemen, your very humb’l Serv’t

To the Hon’ble Com’ttee of  
Safety.

Benjamin Bellows.”

Ira Allen also wrote to the New Hampshire Committee of Safety for assistance in making a stand against the enemy in Vermont, and the President of the State Council replied that New Hampshire had already determined to send for assistance one-fourth of her militia, under Brig. Gen. John Stark. Accordingly, on the 19th, Gen. Stark received orders to repair to No. 4, Charlestown, N. H., to take command.

Without doubt the Rockingham company, whose record is so tersely given upon our records, went to Charlestown and there joined the forces of the general and with him “Marcht” across the mountains of Vermont, and with him shared the glories of that ever memorable battle at Bennington on the 16th of August, 1777.

LOCAL MATTERS CONNECTED WITH CELEBRATING THE CENTENNIAL OF THE BATTLE OF BENNINGTON—PRESIDENT HAYES IN BELLOWS FALLS

The observance of the sesqui-centennial at Bennington reminded a number of the older residents of Bellows Falls and vicinity of the happenings here locally, and the preparations for the celebration which took place fifty years ago in the observance of the centennial of the battle. Col. George W. Hooker of Brattleboro was the marshal commanding the second division in the parade at Bennington and had as his aides from here George H. Babbitt, assistant quartermaster; Dr. Frank Whitman, surgeon; B. T. Phelps, assistant provost marshal; and as additional aides Barney Cannon, Jr., Wyman Flint, A. H. Fisher, E. E. Dewey and George K. Russell.

Brigadier General F. G. Butterfield, who was then a merchant in Saxtons River, had the handling of the local Civil War veterans who took so important a part in that celebration. He had over 30 from his section of the town, and with the immediately surrounding towns made an important part of the parade. They marched across the mountain from Brattleboro with the county delegation, and the Boston Journal of the next day gave this account of the trip and their appearance:—

“The Windham county Old Soldiers battalion, uniformed in blue blouses and commanded by Col. George W. Hooker, who had a mounted staff of about fifty men, left Brattleboro at half past eight Monday morning. The command reached Marlboro at noon and took dinner

there, then marched on to Wilmington, where they spent the night, and gave a serenade by the Brattleboro Cornet Band; left Wilmington at five o'clock Tuesday morning, and reached the Crawford House, Woodford, in time for dinner, after which the march was resumed toward Bennington, where the veterans arrived at half past four Tuesday afternoon.

“As the column, headed by the various brass bands, marched along, the sidewalks were thronged with spectators, whose huzzas rent the air, while their hearts were stirred at the sight of the empty sleeves of battle-scarred soldiers whose brave deeds are recorded in the history of the Vermont volunteers. At the Putnam House where the columns passed under the triumphal arch, cheer upon cheer greeted the Green Mountain Boys in Blue, which Col. Hooker acknowledged. The ladies waved their handkerchiefs, and amid such greetings the veterans with steady step moved on, proud of the part they were to take in the festivities of the approaching celebration. All along the route, even to the camp ground, a hearty welcome was extended, and the march of the Veterans from Brattleboro to Bennington will pass into history as one of the principal events of the centennial celebration.”

Another event readily recalled by several local residents was the call here on Saturday of that week of President Hayes, who had been at Bennington and spent Friday at Brattleboro and Fayetteville. He was on his way to Windsor where he was to be the guest of the Hon. Wm. M. Evarts. Here at Bellows Falls it was known that the special train was scheduled to go through about ten in the forenoon and a great crowd had assembled some hours earlier. When the train arrived a committee of local citizens waited upon him and asked that he speak to the crowd, which he did briefly, closing by quoting from Lincoln when urgently called to speak during that

historic ride to Washington in 1861: "I suppose you are here to see me and I am here to see you, and I have to inform you that I think I have the best of the bargain." With the President and Mrs. Hayes were Birchard and Webb Hayes and several state officials.

During the entire week of that centennial there were run three special trains daily between Bellows Falls and Bennington. Such important changes have come in methods of transportation in the 50 years that, while the crowds there were probably larger, and also a greater number from Bellows Falls, no increased railroad facilities were required this week. It is pretty certain that fewer people "marched" across the mountain, however.

VERMONT AND NEW HAMPSHIRE NEAR TO  
CIVIL WAR

The cordial and neighborly relations now existing between the Twin States of Vermont and New Hampshire were once strained to the limit, and both states ordered out their militia, fully armed and equipped, ready to enforce what each contended were its rights. Just now the only serious contention between them, and one that has been before the courts several years with small prospect of settlement, is whether the dividing line between them, "The West Bank of the Connecticut River," is at high or low water, as mills erected on each side are claimed for taxation in each state, because of a difference of judgment between them as to where "the west bank" is.

In 1781, just before Vermont was admitted as the 14th state of the Union, two men prominent in the Connecticut valley were prominent actors in a controversy which for some months threatened to plunge the states of Vermont and New Hampshire into civil war, and, in fact, each state actually ordered out its military forces fully equipped and ready to march against the other at a moment's notice. Only for calm, conservative consideration of the other's side of disputed questions, and a strong reluctance to cause bloodshed upon the part of both states, the collision would have occurred and the subsequent history of peaceful and mutually happy relations would have been reversed.

Vermont was then an independent commonwealth, not a member of the United States and without ties to other states or nations. New Hampshire was one of the



original 13 states of the Union. Forty-five towns east of the Connecticut river had voted by large majorities to join themselves to the republic of Vermont, and Vermont had accepted them. For some months the majority and minority of these 45 towns had each had its own separate board of officers, and each had by this means a representative in the Vermont and also the New Hampshire legislatures.

A county known as Washington County, Vt., had been formed of towns in the New Hampshire territory, with Charlestown, N. H., as its shire town. Dr. William Page was high sheriff of this county under Vermont authority, and at the same time Col. Enoch Hale was high sheriff of Cheshire County, as the same territory was known in New Hampshire. As both governments had their own separate courts governing one and the same people, no decisions could be enforced by either side, owing to the opposition of the other. The legislature of Vermont had met at Charlestown in October, 1781. A clash of authority was sure to come.

Early in November of that year Sheriff Page, under Vermont authority, had arrested two citizens of Westmoreland for some offence. The legislature of New Hampshire, then sitting at Exeter, passed a special statute empowering Col. Hale to go to Charlestown and release these men "held under the pretended authority of Vermont." Failing to accomplish this, he was to call on the militia for assistance.

He went to Charlestown and demanded of Jailer Ely the release of the prisoners, Being refused, he made show of attempt at breaking into jail and was promptly arrested and placed in jail himself. The affair being

reported to the governors of both Vermont and New Hampshire, Governor Chittenden of Vermont authorized Dr. Page, with two Vermont justices of the peace, to go to Exeter and endeavor to arrange some peaceable solution of the difficulty regarding authority over this territory. Upon their arrival at Exeter they were all three promptly arrested by direct warrant from the president of the Council of New Hampshire and confined there in jail.

The governors of each state at once ordered a regiment of militia to be armed and equipped, ready to march at a moment's notice, to maintain the dignity of their respective commonwealths. In this situation, with both sheriffs in jail, and excitement running high among the people on both sides of the Connecticut, the strained conditions remained for some weeks. Governor Chittenden opened a personal correspondence with General Washington (who was not elected as the first president until 1789) and through his calm and conservative advice Vermont was induced to give up all claim to territory east of the Connecticut river, although the individual towns still held by a large majority to their original wish to remain a part of this state. The west bank of the river was fixed upon as the dividing line and it so remains today although its location is variously questioned.

The sheriffs were released upon their own recognizances about January 1, 1782, and were never brought to trial. They both became a few years later prominent and influential business men of Bellows Falls, and were firm friends. Very soon after this Vermont was admitted as the 14th state of the Union, this incident being

one of the strong points in demonstrating the wisdom of the admission.

Col. Enoch Hale, a prominent resident of Rindge, Walpole and Bellows Falls, in 1785 built the first toll bridge across the Connecticut river and owned and managed it many years. He was a leading citizen and land holder in the town of Rockingham and village of Bellows Falls. He was moderator of the town meeting held September 1, 1795, and at different times held various town offices. He died in Grafton, Vt., in 1813.

Dr. William Page of Charlestown, N. H., with Gen. Lewis R. Morris of Springfield, Vt., was named as an incorporator of the Bellows Falls canal in Vermont in 1791, and in New Hampshire in 1792. He moved to Bellows Falls in 1798 and was the engineer in full charge of the construction of the canal, as well as overseer and projector of several manufacturing industries of the village. He was appointed as the first postmaster of Bellows Falls April 1, 1801, his office being in the same office as the Bellows Falls Canal Co., located in the rear of the present clothing store of J. J. Fenton & Co. He was the grandfather of the late Gov. John B. Page of Vermont and he died in Rutland in 1810.

## OLD CROWN POINT MILITARY ROAD, 1750-1760

The old Crown Point military road, the location of which, as it starts from the Connecticut river, is about nine miles from Bellows Falls on the farm of the late J. M. Butterfield, is plainly marked beside the Springfield highway by two substantial markers, erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution chapter.

This road was cut through the wilderness in 1759 and 1760 for the purpose of making it possible for the British army to cross the Green Mountains to Lake Champlain, and thence up the lake on their way to capture Montreal, then held by the French. Williams, in his early history of Vermont, writing of the completion of the road, says: "They made such dispatch as to join the army at Crown Point on the 31st of July, where they embarked with Col. Haviland in batteaux and whaleboats and sailed up Lake Champlain for Canada. The three divisions of the English forces under Gen. Amherst, Gen. Murray from Quebec and Col. Haviland, met near Montreal, which city surrendered without a struggle, and the French power passed away forever from Canada."

The road was begun in 1759 by Capt. John Stark (later the general who commanded at the battle of Bennington). The section on the west side of the mountain was completed that year, and in the spring of 1760 the start was made from the Connecticut river and the road completed, being an important adjunct to the subjugation of Canada. The building of the east end of the road commencing at the Connecticut river was done by Col. John Goffe and a regiment of 800 men of the English army.

## THE FIRST POST ROADS AND FIRST POST RIDERS THROUGH BELLOWS FALLS

The Legislature of Vermont, October 27, 1795, authorized the building of the first post-road through this town, to be part of a road to be laid out from the south line of Vermont to the north line of the town of Newbury. Dr. Samuel Cutler and David Sanderson of Bellows Falls, and Adjutant Eliakim Spooner were appointed a committee to lay out this road through Windham County, and it was "to be laid out near Connecticut river." The definite survey of the road through the town of Rockingham showing each turn and the points of compass was filed at the town clerk's office in 1796. Its location has never been changed in any material degree, except for a few rods at the north end of the village of Bellows Falls, necessitated by the building of the "Champlain & Connecticut Railroad" (now the Rutland Railroad) in 1847. It was a part of a system of post-roads of this section of New England, being a post route, or "a road on which the post or mail is conveyed."

"Post-riders" were employed, and an important part of their work was the sale and delivery of the different newspapers published in this vicinity. At the time this post-road was built, there were papers published at Westminster, Walpole and Windsor, and the post-riders had control of their circulation upon their routes.

Two advertisements in the *Vermont Intelligencer and Bellows Falls Advertiser* in 1818, the second year of its publication, were as follows:—

### "POST RIDERS NOTICE

"*Reuben Prentiss* proposes to ride Post for the purpose of distributing the *Vermont Intelligencer* for the

term of one year from the 26th of January last, and will supply gentlemen, who may be disposed to take said paper on the most accommodating terms in any part of his route, which will be from Bellows Falls to Saxton's River village, Westminster west parish, Putney, Brookline and Townshend, to Athens.

“Said Prentiss will likewise perform errands and transact business with which he may be entrusted, with faithfulness, punctuality, and at a reasonable rate.

February 16, 1818.”

#### “A POST RIDER

“*Wanted* immediately, to distribute the *Vermont Intelligencer* in Rockingham, Springfield, Weathersfield, Reading and perhaps further north. There are always about one hundred subscribers on a part only of said route, and it is believed that more might be obtained. Apply at the printing office.

February 16, 1818.

BILL BLAKE & CO.”

An earlier post-route, which had accommodated the inhabitants of this section of the Connecticut valley, was laid out down the Connecticut on the New Hampshire side. Page 263 of the Records of the New Hampshire Committee of Safety shows that July 27, 1781, John Balch was appointed a post-rider for the term of three months, and they agreed that said Balch set out from Portsmouth on Saturday morning and ride to Haverhill by way of Conway, Plymouth, thence down the river to Charlestown, Keene and to Portsmouth again, every fourteen days during the term, for which service he was to receive “seventy hard dollars, or paper money equivalent.”

In 1792, a post-rider carried the mail once a fortnight from Concord through Weirs, New Boston, Amherst, Wilton, Peterboro, Dublin, and Marlboro to Keene, and thence through Westmoreland, Walpole, Alstead, Acworth, Charlestown, Claremont, Newport and Hopkinton to Concord. Thomas Smith of Surry was post-rider on this route. His compensation was twelve pounds per year and the perquisites on papers and private packages. The postage at that time was six-pence (about twelve cents) on each private letter for every forty miles and four pence for any number of miles less than forty. Mr. Balch continued to ride for two years and was succeeded by Timothy Balch of Keene, who was re-appointed in 1785.

FIRST POST OFFICES ESTABLISHED IN ROCK-  
INGHAM AND BELLOWS FALLS IN 1801

In the year 1783, while Vermont was an independent republic without allegiance to other states or nations, Governor Chittenden and his council established the first post office in Vermont at Bennington and authorized the appointment of the first post-rider between that town and the office at Albany, N. Y. The man rode weekly carrying the mail in his saddle-bags. The next year the legislature of the state established four other offices, those at Rutland, Brattleboro, Windsor and Newbury, and the post-rider—the pioneer of the splendidly equipped railway post offices of today—between Brattleboro and Newbury passed through Bellows Falls once each week, each way.

The rates of postage were the same as those of the United States, which then numbered but thirteen states. Anthony Haswell, Esq., of Bennington, was chosen postmaster general of Vermont. The post-rider between Bennington and Brattleboro was allowed for travel three pence per mile, while riders on other routes were allowed only two pence, the additional rate being on account of the extremely mountainous country between Bennington and Brattleboro. These post-riders were allowed the exclusive privilege of carrying letters, papers and packages on their respective routes, and any person who infringed upon their rights was subject to a fine of ten pounds. Upon the admission of Vermont to the Union, as the fourteenth state, in 1791, the post offices established in this commonwealth became a part of the gen-



eral government, and increased rapidly during the next few years.

When regular stage coaches were started in this vicinity, about 1800, the mails were transferred to and carried by them. In the year 1818 stages and mails passed through Bellows Falls in four directions three times each week.

In 1808, the rate of postage required for letters was: eight cents for a single sheet (size not limited) for less than 40 miles; over 40 and less than 90, ten cents; over 90 and not exceeding 150 miles, 12½ cents; 150 to 300 miles, seventeen cents; 300 to 500 miles, twenty cents; and over 500 miles the rate was twenty-five cents. If two pieces of paper were enclosed the rate was double the above, three pieces was treble, four pieces, weighing one ounce, was quadruple those rates.

As late as 1861 each letter was required to be placed in a wrapper in the post office, and in the package was enclosed a "way-bill" showing the name of the addressee and the amount of postage upon it, similar to what was later done with express and freight parcels.

The first post office in this town was at Rockingham, that then being the largest village in town, Roswell Bellows being commissioned as postmaster January 1, 1801. The second was in Bellows Falls, this being established April 1, 1801. The first postmaster here was Dr. William Page, the grandfather of the late Ex-Gov. John B. Page of Rutland. He was the civil engineer who built the Bellows Falls canal, which was chartered under the name "Company for Rendering Connecticut River Navigable by Bellows Falls," The first post office was located in the office of that company, of which Dr. Page

was the superintendent and engineer. The building overlooked the canal on the brow of the hill just in the rear of Mammoth block and the present location of the clothing store of J. J. Fenton & Co. The canal was not completed so that boats passed through it till the next year, and the canal tolls were all collected at this building for many years thereafter.

Dr. Page was postmaster four years, being succeeded by Quartus Morgan, proprietor of the old "Morgan Tavern," still standing on Rockingham Street, and that building was the second location. Since the office was established here there have been 23 different postmasters, and the office has been located in about as many different places.

STAGES OVER THE "FOREST LINE"—DEAN BUTTERFIELD A POPULAR DRIVER—TIME TABLES

During stage times in this vicinity Dean Butterfield, a well known driver over the "Forest Line," used to relate the following anecdote to the "outside passengers" who rode with him. On those old coaches it was always considered the most desirable place to ride on the outside, and there were often as many as six on the top of the coach with the driver. Two or three sat on the driver's seat, and three or four on the stage roof, with their feet hanging down back of those who were with the driver. There was always an iron railing around the side and rear of the coach that extended to the front edge of the driver's seat so there was little danger of any person, or thing, falling off that was once placed on the roof. It was possible to enjoy the scenery here, and not the least appreciated part was the entertaining stories told by most of the drivers.

Mr. Butterfield would inform any passengers who were timid at the coach being over crowded, that: "I once took 22 passengers safely from Bellows Falls into Boston including one man who weighed 280 pounds, and he rode all the way on a trunk placed for him on the top of this very stage. It happened on that trip that John Quincy Adams and his wife were among the inside passengers. They had been visiting Saratoga Springs. Mr. Adams asked me on arriving at Nashua, the end of my route, to continue on to Boston, because he 'felt perfectly safe with such a driver.' So I changed with the Lowell driver and went into Boston with my stage

and 22 people all right. There was on the Forest Road at that time a very large amount of travel in the spring summer and fall—‘people went to the Springs in the summer and to the Falls in the spring’—as the great Dodge used to say at his concerts. There were few mammoth trunks in those days and all baggage paid extra charges. In the winter the passengers were mostly business men going to and from Boston markets.”

The “Forest Line” turnpike was an extension of the Green Mountain turnpike which came from Rutland, crossing the Connecticut river at South Charlestown, four miles north of Bellows Falls, and continuing via Alstead and Surry to Keene and Boston.

An advertisement in the Bellows Falls Gazette in 1839 gives information regarding the facilities of staging and railroad transportation between Bellows Falls and Boston in that year. The advertisement was surmounted by a large cut of an old-fashioned stage coach drawn by six prancing horses and was as follows:

### “NEW ARRANGEMENTS

#### “Forest Line of Stages

“LEAVES Bellows Falls, Vermont, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 4 A. M. via Drewsville, N. H., Alstead, Marlow, Stoddard, Hancock, Greenfield, Lyndeboro, Wilton, Milford and arrives in Nashua in season for the 4½ o’clock Train of Cars for Boston the same day.

“RETURNING, leaves Nashua on the arrival of the Morning Train of Cars from Boston Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and arrives at Bellows Falls at 9 o’clock P. M.

“STAGES LEAVE BELLOWS FALLS the next morning for Troy, Albany and Saratoga via Townshend and Stratton.

“For Montpelier via Charlestown and Woodstock—  
for Middlebury and Burlington, Chester and Rutland.

“This is considered the best route from the Con-  
necticut river to Boston.

“BUSS, MORRISON & CO., Props.

“Bellows Falls, June 1, 1839.”

“TURN-PIKES” USED IN VERMONT BETWEEN  
THE ERAS OF “POST-ROADS” AND “HIGH-  
WAYS”

The era of “turn-pikes” in this section of the Connecticut river valley, which succeeded the years of the old post-road, and later became a part of the present highway system, was inaugurated during the very last years of the 18th century, and continued in this town and vicinity until about 1840. The name “turn-pike” originated from the “gate on a road to obstruct passengers, in order to take toll—originally consisting of cross bars armed with pikes, and turning on a post or pin.” A “turn-pike road” was a “road made by individuals, or by a corporation, on which tolls were collected,” and their construction was a popular mode of investment.

The first through this town was the “Green Mountain Turn-pike,” chartered by the legislature November 3, 1799. It extended from the east line of Clarendon to Bellows Falls. Among its first owners and incorporators were John Atkinson, the Englishman who invested his money in the building of the canal here and lost the most of it; Dr. William Page, the civil engineer who built the canal, father of the late Governor John B. Page, and the first postmaster of Bellows Falls; and Daniel Farrand, one of the first lawyers in this town, later judge of the Supreme Court.

There were to be four gates on the road, one near its east end in Rockingham, one in Cavendish, one in Ludlow and one in Shrewsbury. The tolls established by law varied from 30 cents for a single horse carriage or coach, to 56 cents if drawn by two horses, with a

schedule of additions to be made for additional horses, and varying amounts for different animals. These rates were to be collected at each of the four gates. However, the charter provided that "no person shall be obliged to pay any toll at either of said gates who shall be going to or from public worship or to or from any grist mill or saw mill, or on any militia duty or on the ordinary duty of family concerns," which it might seem would cut out a material amount of the tolls. Among the other provisions of the charter, toll gatherers must not delay travelers, and the corporation should be liable for any damages because of the insufficiency of the road. If any person should turn out for the purpose of going around any gate he should forfeit triple toll as a fine, and plain signs should be displayd at each gate showing the rates of toll.

A charter was granted in 1807 to a company for the building of a turnpike connecting with the Green Mountain Turnpike at Chester and continuing over the mountain to Manchester, Vt. This later became a part of the most popular stage route between Boston and Saratoga Springs, and one toll gate on the west side of the mountain has been kept in use collecting toll until within a very few years, being the last gate on a turn-pike in Vermont.

Another charter was granted by the legislature of 1800 to the Connecticut River Turn-pike Company to build a turn-pike through Rockingham. It was empowered to build a road "from the new turn-pike north of the bridge at Bellows Falls to the south line of Thetford, in such place or places as said corporation shall Choose." There were to be four gates in the distance,

and the rates were the same as those quoted for the Green Mountain Turn-pike except that they began with 31 cents instead of 56, and all were correspondingly lower. It was provided, however, that "no one of the gates contemplated in this act shall be erected in the Town of Windsor."

These turn-pikes were built and maintained by private capital for about forty years, after which the different towns through which they were laid arranged to purchase them and they became important parts of the present highway system of the state.

Older residents still refer to certain sections of road as "the turn-pike."



## EARLY STAGE DRIVERS BETWEEN RUTLAND AND BOSTON—OTIS BARDWELL AND DAN ARMS

More than twenty-five years ago, while gathering historical facts regarding the vicinity of Bellows Falls, the writer had the following statement from Newman Weeks, then a well known resident and business man of Rutland.

“In regard to my trips by stage in my younger days, some peculiar incidents came under my observation and they still cling to my memory. The people of Bellows Falls and Brattleboro I knew about, especially the old stage, railroad and military men.

“The Old Cheshire hotel in Keene was the noted stage lodging house from which the four- and sometimes six-horse, 16-passenger coaches left in the morning for Fitchburg and Boston. The stage agent, located at the Cheshire house, was a very large man and as stern and savage as he was large. One very popular stage driver was ‘Bill Hodgkins.’ He always wanted the seats on the box outside to be reserved for the good-looking ladies. The stages in those early days landed at the ‘Old Stage Tavern,’ on the narrow Elm street in Boston, Mass. Time from Rutland, Vt., to Boston was three days, and the fare was \$8. The driver expected the cigars and drinks would be free at all the points where horses were exchanged.

“Now for two incidents: In 1848 I was in trade in Clarendon, Vt., with a nephew, D. W. C. Gaskill. He was going to Boston to buy a stock of goods. The cashier of the bank in Rutland asked him to take a package of \$5000 to be left at the Suffolk bank, Boston. To send by express was quite expensive, and they would take the risk. He took a peculiar way that proved safe. He used an old, badly worn sheepskin valise; put the money

package in a stocking leg with other stockings, shirts, etc.; put in some old newspapers; had no lock but fastened it with straps. The old valise was put with many others on top of the stage coach and at hotel stopping places over night it was thrown off and piled with the other baggage in the wide front hall of the hotel. There was no special care taken of the old worn valise and the cash reached the old Boston bank all right.

“On one of my return trips from Boston, Otis Bardwell was keeping a stage tavern at Walpole. Horses and drivers were changed there. The four-horse coach was driven to the door and little Dan Arms took the reins and was waiting for the word, ‘All aboard.’ One large, dignified, gray-haired passenger was walking back and forth on the piazza. Mr. Bardwell very politely informed him that the coach was waiting for him. He said, ‘Where is the driver?’ He was informed that the man on the coach was the driver. ‘What! That boy to drive us over the Vermont mountains to Rutland?’ ‘Yes,’ said Mr. Bardwell, ‘and if he doesn’t get you there all right I will pay all damage on demand.’ Little Dan, as a young, single man, was popular because he was so very accommodating. If a good-looking school teacher had a long ways to walk, the stage would wait for her to fix her curls, and get all ready to sit on the box and watch the horses. Little Dan Arms had lots of friends, as stage driver and later as conductor on the railroad.”

The Daniel Arms referred to by Mr. Weeks as so popular a stage driver lived many years at Bellows Falls, and was one of the first passenger conductors on the Rutland railroad. Later for some years he was ticket agent at the Bellows Falls station and died while holding that position.

## FIRST RAILROADS BUILT INTO BELLOWS FALLS AND IN VERMONT

One of the earliest efforts to create public sentiment in Vermont favorable to the building of railroads originated in Bellows Falls in the summer of 1843. Dr. S. M. Blake, then editor of the Bellows Falls Gazette, was very enthusiastic and devoted much space to the subject. The result was a largely attended railroad meeting here early in 1844.

Hon. Alvah Crocker of Fitchburg, Mass., had just returned from Europe and was full of enthusiasm and railroad enterprise. He was present at this meeting and greatly assisted in explaining the operation and results of railroads already built in other countries and states. At this meeting all railroads now running in this part of the state, including the West River railroad, which was not built until during the '70s, were projected and discussed.

The first charter of the Vermont Central Railroad Company was granted by Legislature November 15, 1835, and the revised charter, under which the road was built, was passed October 31, 1843. January 8, 1844, a largely attended railroad convention was held at Montpelier that resulted in the raising of money for the surveys, and later in raising the required stock for the first railroad to be built in Vermont. The contract to build the entire road from Windsor to Burlington, 115 miles, was let to Sewal F. Belknap. The first rail was laid at White River Junction on the farm of Col. Samuel Nutt early in 1847, and Isaac B. Culver, assistant engineer of that division,

was accorded the honor of driving the first spike in the track of this road.

A regular passenger train first passed over the road from White River Junction to Bethel June 26, 1848, and this was the first railroad train for carrying passengers that was run in Vermont.

The first railroad to reach Bellows Falls was the Cheshire Railroad, now the Fitchburg division of the Boston & Maine. This corporation was chartered by the New Hampshire Legislature December 27, 1844, and the Sullivan County Railroad from here to Windsor was chartered by the same state July 10, 1846.

The first train of excursionists from Boston, Fitchburg, Keene and other points, reached here January 1, 1849, and went as far north as Charlestown on the line of the Sullivan Railroad. This train did not cross the river into Vermont at all, the railroad bridge not being built over the Connecticut river until a year or two later. There were great demonstrations of joy all along the route. Following is the quaint account of the event contained in the Bellows Falls Gazette of January 4, 1849:

#### “THE CARS HAVE COME!

“On Monday, January 1, much to the astonishment of some, and gratification of all, the first train of cars ever seen in this vicinity passed over the Cheshire road and Sullivan to Charlestown, N. H. The day was fine and a great assembly of people had collected here to witness the grand entree of the Iron Horse. The engine came up in grand style and when opposite our village, the monster gave one of its most savage yells, frightening men, women and children considerably, and bringing forth the most deafening howls from all the dogs in the

neighborhood. This day, Thursday, the Sullivan road is to be opened with the usual ceremonies, to Charlestown, and then the arrival of the cars will be a common everyday business affair.”

The road was opened through from Charlestown to Windsor March 31 of that year. The first passenger conductors on the Sullivan road were O. J. Brown of Claremont, who had been many years a stage driver, and Ambrose Arnold of Westminster, who many years later became superintendent of the Vermont Central Railroad.

The first work in the construction of the “Champlain & Connecticut Railroad,” chartered November 1, 1843, now the Rutland Railroad, was done at Bellows Falls during the month of February, 1847. They began laying the rails from Bellows Falls April 15, 1849, and the road was opened through to Burlington December 18th of the same year. A. P. Crossett, then a resident of Bellows Falls, often said that he moved the first three wheelbarrow loads of dirt in its construction, on the island on which the station now stands. He was a laborer then for Judge Horace Baxter, who lived on the island and had the contract for building a number of miles at this end of the line.

There was much rivalry between the Vermont Central via Montpelier, and the Rutland road, to see which road would complete its line into Burlington first. The Central was successful, that line being opened for business June 20, 1849.

Although the Vermont Valley Railroad between here and Brattleboro was chartered November 8, 1841, it was not opened for business until June, 1851. For many years the general offices of this company, as well

as the only machine shop on the line, was in Bellows Falls. The machine shop was located "under the hill" near where the Claremont Paper Company's mill is at the present time. Superintendent Peyton R. Chandler, and later Madison Sloat, had their headquarters here, and neither the locomotives or trains went north of here, but all had to "change cars" at Bellows Falls. In 1854 only one passenger conductor was on the run between here and Brattleboro and his name was Deming. The headquarters of the Sullivan Railroad were at Charlestown and the first superintendent was Edward Thompson. There was a big engine house and repair shop on the west side of the railroad, just south of the present station, both of which buildings remained there until very recent years, in a dilapidated condition.

In the building of the railroads in this section of New England the laborers were mostly emigrants from Ireland. As some came from the northern part of that country, and some from the southern part, the citizens of which two sections then, as in all years since, were at eternal enmity with each other, many conflicts occurred and a number of fatal clashes resulted between them as they worked on the railroads.

In the building of the Sullivan Railroad through the village of North Walpole, across the river from here, the section from south of "Governor's Brook" to the north end of the Cheshire Railroad, which is near the crossing above the present engine house, was built under a foreman named Thompson. The Grandfield Brothers were in charge of the next section south, the first one on the Cheshire road, the two being built at the same time.

These were both built entirely by Irish emigrants and, by a mischance, from different counties in the old country. Desperate fights occurred between these two factions at different times while the work was in progress. Some blood was shed, and it was currently reported that the results were in one or two instances fatal to the belligerents. At one time all the men working for the Grandfields were driven from their homes in the temporary shanties by the men of the northern section, and, with their families, sought shelter on "Fall Mountain," as it was then called.

The work on Thompson's section did not progress rapidly because the deep cut through the ledge east of the falls was of a peculiarly hard character, and the drift was in such direction that the powder used in those days would blow out only a small portion at a time. It was said to be by far the hardest piece of road to build in this vicinity. Thompson was succeeded by the Larkin Brothers, but still the work lagged and was behind. The Cheshire road was completed and the Sullivan Railroad lacked only this section to connect the two roads in the winter of 1848-9.

Work had just commenced on a deep sand cut in the hill on the terrace later occupied by A. F. Nims. The high sand hill on the west side of the track, corresponding with the Nims terrace, has since been removed. Sewal F. Belknap was the head contractor of the Sullivan road, over the Larkin Bros., and he attempted to take matters into his own hands. Whether it was a disagreement as to pay or hours of work is unknown, but he went to Boston and brought a train-load of men to take the places of those who had been employed.

On the morning that the train-load of men arrived, the Larkins and their men appeared all dressed in their best suits, but bare-headed, coatless and with their sleeves rolled up above their elbows. The women joined them in holiday caps and aprons each carrying a long white stocking filled with cobble stones. The hill where the work was stopped then extended west of the highway. Along the brink of the deep gash they had made in its side these men and women quietly took their places. Mr. Belknap marched his recruits from the end of the Cheshire line to the cut, drew a sword cane and walked into the pit saying to the men, "Go to work, my boys." A deep voice from the bank above answered him, "Bejabers, the first man who strikes a blow is a dead man sure." None of the workmen would face this challenge and follow Belknap, so he was obliged to walk out of the pit as he had walked into it, alone. The men from Massachusetts demanded that they be taken back, claiming misrepresentation. An agreement was reached whereby the Larkins relinquished their contract from that time, and the work went forward. Fifty teams were put on and the cut and the fill near by were rapidly completed.

In the town of Newbury at about this time work was being done on what was known as the Ingalls Hill, on the Passumpsic Railroad. Irishmen from both Cork and Connaught counties were employed and frequent riots occurred. The former were called "Corkonians" and the latter "Fardowners." The Connaught men had been there some time when a large party of the Cork men, who had been constructing the Northern Railroad, came up and soon there was trouble. Michael Kelley,



a foreman for the road, was shot and killed. Some of the rioters were sent to State's Prison, but as it could not be proved which one fired the fatal shot no death penalty was imposed. However for months there were collisions between the workmen from the north and south parts of Ireland.

## RACING RAILROAD TRAINS ON THE OLD VERMONT VALLEY AND CHESHIRE ROADS

The Vermont Valley Railroad between here and Brattleboro was built during 1850 and 1851, the first passenger train over the road reaching Bellows Falls early in June of the latter year, regular service between the two villages dating from then. The first conductors were P. R. Chandler and R. A. Deming. For some months trains had been run from South Vernon to Bellows Falls by way of the Ashuelot line and Keene. The day the first passenger train ran between the two villages direct it was a question whether the trip could be made as quickly by way of Keene as by way of Putney, and there was some strife. An interesting communication has recently come to light written by a passenger on this first train, which followed the Connecticut river, who was evidently familiar with the conditions and men on each train. He wrote:

“Our old friend Briggs, of the Connecticut River road, who always keeps his ‘eye skinned,’ undertook to play us a bit of a trick and show us that ‘some things could be done as well as others.’ Having a few minutes the start at South Vernon, he whipped up his ‘old hoss’ around through Keene and over the summit, and when he came in sight of the Cheshire, as it approached the river, behold! there he was, gliding swiftly and noiselessly like a serpent among the hills toward Walpole. Our Valley Nag, wholly unsuspecting of what was going on, was trotting along at a rate of about 40 miles the hour, and admiring the beautiful scenery of the river till, on arriving opposite Walpole, where the roads approach the river, the Cheshire train was seen shooting along at lightning speed for Bellows Falls. Some pre-

tend they could see our friend B.—impatient at the slow progress of the engine—flying along, John Gilpin-like, hat off and tails streaming ahead of it; at any rate, it appears to be well authenticated (which lends some probability to the story) that he actually got to Bellows Falls some time before his hat, which came sailing along after him. It is undeniable, however, that friend B. ‘won the hat,’ for he did reach Bellows Falls as soon as we, though going around by Keene; and it may be observed of him generally that it is much easier to follow than to lead him. From Walpole the roads are parallel with each other and near the river, and it was a pretty sight to see the cars on either side, gliding along the road, now concealed for a moment by the hills, or a grove of trees, and again running on the side of a hill, with the long train of cars around and after the engines like two huge anacondas on a race and striving for victory.”

RUTLAND RAILROAD SOLD FOR \$22 IN 1855—  
EARLY CONDUCTORS AND STAGE DRIVERS—  
“FLYING SWITCHES,” A DANGEROUS PRACTICE OF EARLY RAILROADING

Early in the history of the Rutland & Burlington Railroad the corporation became financially embarrassed, and in January, 1855, Sheriff George Slate of this village sold at auction here 22,000 shares of the stock of the corporation for \$22, it being at the rate of one mill a share of \$100 face value. The purchasers of the road at this price were William Henry, who was president of the old Bellows Falls bank and later a member of Congress from this district; Jabez D. Bridgeman, a prominent local attorney; and Peyton R. Chandler, who was superintendent of the Vermont Valley Railroad between here and Brattleboro. They became owners and directors of the corporation. They managed it but a short time when a thorough reorganization was effected. In January, 1855, this road was running only one train each way. It came down from Rutland in the morning and returned at night.

The first passenger conductors of the road between here and Rutland were the late Josiah Bowtell and Daniel Arms of Bellows Falls both of whom had been engaged in staging along the line previous to the construction of the road. Elisha P. Reed and Henry H. Howe were other of the earlier conductors residing here. Mr. Bowtell was the last of the old conductors to pass away May 8, 1890. The oldest engineer was Albert Pratt, who until 1903 was still running a passenger loco-

motive between here and Rutland, and who died that year. Charles C. Caldwell began service on trains of the Rutland road in the spring of 1858, and died in Bellows Falls November 26, 1905, having been in railroad service during the entire time.

A peculiar, and seemingly very hazardous, practice 50 years ago in the handling of passenger trains at White River Junction and Bellows Falls was the practice of making "flying switches," as they were called, in entering the railroad yards at the two stations. At White River Junction, passenger trains coming in from all four directions, while running at high speed, would be cut apart a half mile or more before reaching the station and each car with a brakeman on the front would run to the station by its own momentum, each section separated a short distance to allow the switchman to throw the switches. When the different cars of the train came to a standstill they would be on different tracks to start out over the different divisions.

At Bellows Falls this was done only by trains from the north and from Boston, owing to the construction of the yard. Often the noon mail was made up at White River Junction with the regular car that was to go over the Cheshire road between other cars that were to go down the river, and the train would be cut into three sections a mile or more north of the station. When the Cheshire car reached the yard on the Vermont side it would run down opposite the depot on the "Y," that was then there, and the Boston train would back onto it, while the cars behind would be guided on the main line and coupled to the forward part of the train to

continue to Springfield. It was always a hazardous practice, but no serious accident ever occurred from it at either station, although it was done at a high rate of speed.

THE FIRST TOLL BRIDGE AT BELLOWS FALLS  
—NATHANIEL TUCKER OWNED IT LATER

The first bridge across the Connecticut river at any point in its entire course was at Bellows Falls. It was built by Col. Enoch Hale, a prominent resident of this vicinity, in 1785. It was the only bridge across the river until 1796, when one was built at Springfield, Mass. The bridge here was one of the most noted of that early time, there being few as long in New England, and none in so wild a section of country as this. The Massachusetts Spy of February 10, 1785, had this to say about the enterprise, "This bridge is thought to exceed any ever built in America in strength, elegance, and public utility, as it is the direct way from Boston through New Hampshire and Vermont to Canada." This old first bridge was of entirely different style of building from the present.

In the summer of 1912 the director of the Deutsches museum in Munich, Germany, with his staff, visited this country and secured several masterpieces which they considered as reproductions of the best types of those old wooden bridges, and among those that are now on exhibition in that museum is the picture of this Bellows Falls bridge, reproduced from the painting of it which hangs in the Rockingham library executed by the late Frederick J. Blake. It was recommended and furnished by the executive officials of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers as one of the most important wooden bridges in America at that early day. It was selected from among eight or nine structures, or was one of them. This list was as follows: Arch bridge over the Delaware

at Trenton, built in 1804; Market-street bridge over the Schuylkill, near Philadelphia, built in 1805; bridge over Mill creek, Cincinnati; bridge over the Connecticut river at Bellows Falls, built in 1785; Cascade bridge at Lanesboro on the New York and Erie Railroad, built in 1848; the bridge of the Richmond and St. Petersburg Railroad (Southern Railway), over the James river at Richmond, built in 1836; the Long bridge of the Georgia and Western Atlantic Railroad; the Howe bridge of the Connecticut River Railroad (Boston & Maine), over the Chicopee river, the largest trestle bridge in the world at those early times, built in 1852, burned in 1878.

One of the most prominent citizens of Bellows Falls a century ago was a man named Nathaniel Tucker. In 1826 he came into possession of the old first toll bridge across the Connecticut river here, and in 1840 he planned and financed the erection of the present structure that has now served the public 88 years. Mr. Tucker was born in Boston in 1775 and became a resident in Bellows Falls in 1815. He died here in 1875, and his remains were interred in a private family vault on Boston Common, near the Public Gardens.

The first bridge became unsafe, and in 1840 Mr. Tucker consulted a noted local bridge builder, Sanford Granger, in regard to it. Together they planned and built the present structure. Mr. Granger had built a number of important bridges and buildings in the vicinity of Bellows Falls, prominent among them the local Methodist church and the brick block on Westminster Street, which has always been known as the "Granger Block." He owned the saw mill and water power at North Westminster, where the Gage basket factory is



now being operated, and at this mill the lumber for the new bridge was produced. Toll was gathered for passing these two bridges from 1785, when the first bridge was built, until the present bridge was made free by the towns of Rockingham and Westminster November 1, 1904, a period of nearly 120 years.

Previous to coming to Bellows Falls in 1815, Mr. Tucker had been in trade in New York city. During the first years of his residence here he lived in a large and beautiful residence located at the east end of the bridge on a small eminence, which was removed by the building of the railroad. It was just south of where the present locomotive roundhouse of the Boston & Maine Railroad stands. Later he owned and resided in the residence this side of the river, now known as the Hetty Green place, sometimes called by the older residents the "Tucker House."

During most of the years of his ownership of the bridges Mr. Tucker attended to the collection of the tolls himself, and one of the original boxes in which the tolls were kept is still in the family of Levi L. Wetherbee of Atkinson Street, who is one of the descendants. Mr. Tucker was a small wiry man, extremely nervous, and was often the victim of pranks by the boys who teased him. He had a son, Nathaniel, Jr., who was somewhat peculiar and erratic. He was a hunter of some note. At one time he went hunting on horse-back and in riding through the woods his gun was accidentally discharged and killed the horse. His father, when he returned home and was told of the accident, was greatly excited and shaking his cane in the young man's face exclaimed, "Nat—Nat Tucker, the next time you go hunting on

horse-back you go afoot," much to the amusement of several bystanders.

In 1839 there was a great freshet and the frame bridge at South Charlestown, known as the Cheshire Bridge, was washed away, coming down the river whole. The old sign still remained on the front end: "Passengers are not to Pass Faster than a Walk." The old toll bridge was much lower than the present one and Mr. Tucker feared for its safety if the oncoming bridge came over the falls whole. Neighbors who saw Mr. Tucker that day often told of his great excitement as the bridge neared the falls, and he frantically motioned with his cane shouting to the bridge to go on the Vermont side where there was more room. As the bridge neared the dam it suddenly fell apart and passed under Mr. Tucker's bridge without harming it.

Mr. Tucker was an ardent churchman, much troubled at hearing profanity used. The fact that he was very brusque, and sometimes thoughtless in his reproofs, caused the boys to annoy him greatly. He was a most ardent friend of Rev. Carlton Chase, rector of Immanuel (Episcopal) church, who later became bishop of New Hampshire. Mr. Chase was with Mr. Tucker during the freshet referred to above when the water was so high it was in danger of lifting the toll bridge off its abutments. Assisting in tying it with ropes, Rector Chase fell into the rushing rapids, nearly losing his life. A rope was quickly thrown to him, which he grasped and by which he was drawn, much exhausted, to safety.

Once each year Mr. Tucker advertised in the local newspaper that "all those from New Hampshire points who wished to attend the Christmas services at Immanuel

Church could pass the bridge free of toll." The Christmas services were at that time much more extensive than at present, including illumination of buildings, open hospitality; and, with fine music, they drew crowds from thirty miles around.

When staging times excited much competition, at one time the ordinary fare from Boston to Bellows Falls was \$3.00, but for a short time even that was reduced to 25 cents. Drivers sometimes ran the bridge to get here first. One day Driver Brooks ran the bridge and was followed by Mr. Tucker to the local Stage House. He exclaimed with much heat, "You run my bridge—the fine is \$2," upon which Mr. Brooks drew out his wallet and offered to pay; but Mr. Tucker turned away much calmed, saying, "Well—don't ever do it again."

Old residents never tired of telling anecdotes of the peculiarities, as well as the good qualities, of "Old Nathaniel Tucker."

At the New Hampshire end of the old toll bridge, during the first half of the last century, stood a large building known in its last years as the "Tucker Mansion," erected previous to 1799. It was built for a hotel and known early as "The Walpole Bridge Hotel." In 1817 it was known as the "Mansion House Hotel." Soon after the latter date it became a dwelling house and was long occupied by Nathaniel Tucker, who owned the toll bridge, and the toll house also was located on the New Hampshire side of the river, just in front of it.

These buildings, with numerous outhouses, were, in their day, the most entitled to the name of "Mansion" of any in this whole region, because of their grand proportions, elegant surroundings of gardens, statuary, and

decorative trees and foliage. They were a prominent feature of the landscape when the "Great Falls" were noted far and wide for their scenic beauty. Persons coming from the south to this vicinity were struck by their beauty and majestic location. They were removed when the railroad was built in 1849. The small elevation upon which they stood was cut down and is now occupied by the railroad engine house, the mansion formerly standing just where the latter buildings do today. The timbers of which the old mansion were constructed were utilized in the erection of several of the dwellings this side of the river, as an era of home building of large proportions immediately followed the building of the railroads into this village. Mr. Tucker then purchased the brick dwelling on Church Street, now known as the "Hetty Green" house, and there spent his last years, still taking tolls at his bridge, which he had rebuilt in 1840.

## BRIDGES ACROSS THE CONNECTICUT RIVER AT BELLOWS FALLS

The second bridge across the Connecticut river here at Bellows Falls, after the original toll bridges (one built in 1785 and replaced by the present structure in 1840), was for the old Cheshire Railroad to enable them to reach the Bellows Falls yard, and connect with the Rutland & Burlington Railroad. It was located the same as the present double arched stone bridge that is serving the Boston & Maine Railroad.

It was a wooden bridge, with a double track, and was erected a few months after the completion of the Cheshire Railroad from South Ashburnham to Bellows Falls, until which time the station for Bellows Falls had been located over the river near where the present railroad engine house is, and was a picturesque affair. In its day it was a wonder, for its two spans of one hundred and forty feet each marked the limit of length of span at that period. Then, too, its location in a romantic spot, where the water of the river rushed through a narrow channel worn in the rocks, made all the surroundings of the place attractive. It was a massive pine frame work, upon a principle of bridge building that today seems primitive. It did its duty well until the autumn of 1899, when, a question having arisen as to its safety, the Fitchburg road, which then owned it, suddenly decided to replace it with the present beautiful stone arches. The old massive wooden bridge is still well remembered by many of our present residents.

The stone used in the abutments and pier was all quarried from what was known as "Thayer's ledge" in Rockingham, near the Springfield line. It was drawn by team down to the Connecticut and loaded on large scows that brought it down the river to the head of the canal, where it was loaded upon small cars and run down to the bridge by hand. The ledge is located on the top of the divide between the Williams and Black rivers, about two miles from the Connecticut and at the top of a high hill. The late Charles Hapgood had charge of the boats which brought it down the river. A. P. Crossett, then a boy of eighteen, assisted the workmen in running the stone to the bridge on the cars.

The present double arch stone bridge of the Fitchburg division of the Boston & Maine Railroad is unique in having two of the longest arches with the least rise of any bridge in the country. The spans are each one hundred and forty feet long with a rise of only twenty feet. Work was commenced on it by contractors Holbrook, Cabot & Daly of Boston on September 13, 1899, and without interfering with the passage of trains for a single day the structure was completed December 10th of the same year.

The first bridge here of the Sullivan Railroad, similar in every respect to the first frame Cheshire bridge above described, was placed across the river almost directly over the dam during the summer of 1851, about the time of the completion of the Vermont Valley Railroad from Brattleboro to Bellows Falls. The Sullivan Railroad had been open from here to Windsor nearly two years, using a station located near the New Hampshire end of the toll bridge. This primitive bridge in

turn gave way to an iron lattice bridge in 1882, the first piece of iron being laid February 1, and the completed structure was tested May 18 of that year.

In 1911, because of the greatly increased weight of locomotives and cars, the Boston & Maine Railroad was obliged to replace the lattice bridge by the present substantial structure, which was commenced in July of that year and completed about Sept. 1st, 1912. Two men were killed during the construction. On May 20th, 1918, eighteen persons were fined for trespass in persisting to travel across it against the rules of the railroad.

The present beautiful steel arch highway bridge across the Connecticut here was erected in 1904-5, two-thirds of the cost being paid by the town of Walpole, N. H., and one-third by Rockingham, Vt. The plans were prepared by J. R. Worcester, a civil engineer of Boston. The contract for the steel superstructure was awarded to Lewis F. Shoemaker & Company of the Schuylkill Bridge Works of Philadelphia, for \$40,394, while the contract for building the stone work was awarded to Joseph Ross & Sons of Boston for \$4,545, making a total cost of \$44,939.

The bridge was completed inside of the appropriations made, and was opened to the public at 4 P. M. Monday, March 20, 1905, at which time W. H. Kiniry of North Walpole removed the last obstructions. A formal celebration of the event by citizens of the two villages occurred that evening. The school and church bells of North Walpole were rung and red fire and fireworks set off. The citizens' band played on the bridge and later at Russell Memorial Hall in North

Walpole, where the principal celebration and public speaking completed the exercises.

The bridge consists of two spans, one 104 feet 8 inches in length over the Rutland Railroad tracks, and the other 540 feet in length over the river. This latter span is notable in that it is the longest highway arch span in the United States, excepting the one across the Niagara river near the falls, and because it is the only long-span arch with suspended floor in this country. The arch of the main span at its highest point rises seventy feet above the level of the road bed. The bridge is thirty-two feet wide over all and carries a carriage way and sidewalk twenty feet and six feet wide, respectively.

The bridge is built to sustain a maximum load of sixty pounds to the square foot on the road way and the sidewalk, and a concentrated load of eighteen tons on two axles two feet apart. The estimated weight of the steel in the bridge is nine hundred thousand pounds.



## THE BRIDGE BETWEEN WESTMINSTER AND WALPOLE

The first bridge built across the Connecticut river at any point in its length was the toll bridge at Bellows Falls, built in 1785. The nearest one on the north was Cheshire bridge two miles above Charlestown, built in 1805, and the nearest one on the south, the one between Walpole and Westminster, was built in 1807.

### WALPOLE-WESTMINSTER BRIDGES

The present picturesque re-inforced cement bridge between the towns of Walpole and Westminster stands in practically the same location as have stood bridges since the erection of the first primitive wooden toll bridge in 1807.

Toll was collected for crossing the river at this point until 1870.

During the day Wednesday, March 18, 1868, in the passing of ice down the river, without extremely high water, the half of the bridge on the Vermont side was carried away. After that had been replaced by the owners of the bridge the same half fell October 20, 1869, caused by the undermining of the west abutment. It had been owned by an organization known as the Walpole and Westminster Bridge Corporation. They did not have the money to again repair the structure and they became anxious to give it up offering to sell it for a small sum.

The town of Walpole, having held a meeting and voted to pay two-thirds of the expense of building a new bridge, and of buying the corporate interest in the

old one, Westminster, at its annual town meeting, March 1, 1870, voted to appropriate the sum of \$1,500 and instructed its selectmen to unite with the selectmen of Walpole in buying the interests in the old bridge corporation.

At a special Westminster town meeting held April 23, 1870, it was voted to appropriate an additional sum of \$700 to carry out an agreement which had been signed by the selectmen of both towns and had been accepted and ratified at this special meeting, which read as follows:

“Whereas the Walpole and Westminster Bridge Corporation and the stockholders of said corporation have signified their desire to give up said corporate property for a nominal sum in consideration of having a public highway laid and built over said franchise, and certain individuals in Walpole having pledged themselves to pay two thousand dollars, the Cheshire Railroad to furnish one thousand dollars in material and labor, and individuals in Westminster and Rockingham one thousand dollars for the purpose of having and maintaining said public highway, therefore, we, the selectmen of the respective towns aforesaid, agree to the following arrangement, to wit: ‘The selectmen of Walpole, New Hampshire, to survey and lay out upon the line of the late bridge belonging to said corporation to a public highway to the west line of New Hampshire; and the selectmen of Westminster, Vermont, to survey and lay out a public highway to the line of said bridge to the east line of Vermont; and further in behalf of said towns do hereby agree to build and maintain a public highway or free bridge over said route in the proportion of two-thirds of the expense to be borne by the said town of Walpole and one-third by the said town of Westminster, said agreement to be in force and virtue until either of said

towns shall vote to discontinue said highway, and they further agree that the necessary measures shall be taken by said towns to secure acts or laws by the legislature of their respective states legalizing this agreement (if not so now) and making such laws as shall be necessary to regulate the care and maintenance of said bridge hereafter as a public highway in the foregoing proportions.'

"Given under our hands at Walpole and Westminster this 23rd day of April, A. D. 1870. Charles Fisher, Frederick Watkins, Nehemiah Royce, selectmen of Walpole; Henry C. Lane, D. C. Gorham, Nathan Fisher, selectmen of Westminster."

At a special Westminster town meeting June 20, following, called for the purpose of appropriating a further sum for the above purpose, the town voted to instruct its selectmen to do nothing further about the matter and refused to appropriate any more money toward building the bridge. This action caused considerable feeling, culminating in the calling of the third town meeting held on July 8 following, which resulted in rescinding the action taken at the former meeting, and the selectmen were authorized and instructed to carry out the provisions of the above agreement and draw their orders on the treasury for a sufficient sum for the same. The bridge was built, a frame truss structure, and opened for travel in the fall of 1870 with a grand celebration.

This, the third bridge to span the river at this point, was in use until its destruction by fire April 10, 1910. On this date, at about 8:30 P. M., the bridge was destroyed by fire. An incendiary was later arrested, tried and sentenced to the New Hampshire state prison, the evidence against him being conclusive.

The next year the present cement structure was built, becoming an ornament, and credit, to the enterprise of the two towns. Walpole paid two-thirds of the expense, and Westminster one-third, the same as the division in cost of the former bridge.

## THE TOLL BRIDGE BETWEEN WINDSOR AND CORNISH—DATA REGARDING CATTLE AND OTHER STOCK PASSING IT

The old frame toll bridge in use crossing the Connecticut river between Windsor, Vt., and Cornish, N. H., is one of the few remaining bridges over the Connecticut between the two states where tolls are still charged. The present structure was built in 1866, replacing one of a similar pattern which was carried away by flood during the night of March 3rd of that year. It is the third bridge over the river at that point.

The first bridge was built in 1796 at a cost of \$17,099.27, an unusually large sum for bridges of that class at that time. Among the stockholders most prominent were several members of the influential Chase family of Cornish, and many citizens of Windsor, Hartland and other Connecticut river towns. The second bridge was built in 1824, replacing the first, which had been carried away by a freshet in the spring of that year. This in turn was lost by flood in 1849. Up to that time each bridge had been supported by three piers between the abutments, while in the erection of that year's structure only one pier was used, the same as now. Thus, with the exception of the times when carried away by freshets, toll has been continuously charged for passing the bridges for over 130 years. Not unreasonable rates have ever been charged, and there has never been strong talk of asking the two states to free the bridge. It has well served the public.

Examination of the interesting records of the different bridges excites wonder at the changes which have

come into practices and into modes of living in the different eras of the 130 years. One prominent fact comes to mind in the knowledge of the large number of cattle and sheep that passed the Windsor-Cornish bridge in early years on their way to the Boston market. They were driven on foot, and not transported as now. The high peak of the patronage of the bridge for this class seems to have been reached between 1824 and 1850, when the railroad was built through the valley. On October 24th, 1825, 838 sheep and 259 cattle passed over the bridge. November 7th of that year the count was 920 sheep and 236 cattle. The record for that year shows a total of about 9,500 sheep and 2,600 cattle. In 1838, 14,084 sheep and 2,208 cattle were recorded.

The toll gatherer from 1825 to 1838, one "Col. Brown," was very faithful in recording many events of interest. Tuesday, June 28th, 1825, "Marquis Fayette passed with his Suit"; September 14, 1826, there was a "Muster at Cornish"; September 14, 1831, there was a "Wolf Hunt"; September 14, 1831, he recorded an evidently unusual amount of crossing the bridge because of a "Calvenistick Convention" held somewhere. Various passings of boats and rafts up and down the river are mentioned, and on February 16, 1825, there was a "Convention for Navigating the Valley of the Connecticut River.'

What an interesting amount of historical lore could be rehearsed by the different keepers of this, and other, Connecticut river bridges!

## DATES OF BUILDING THE CORNISH-WINDSOR AND WEST RIVER BRIDGES IN 1796

An examination of the files of the "Rising Sun," one of the earliest newspapers published in Keene, N. H., between 1795 and 1798, shows definite information of the dates of opening both the Cornish-Windsor bridge, and the bridge over the West River in Brattleboro, as well as much interesting information regarding those primitive structures.

In the issue of that paper November 8, 1796, is the following:—

“Windsor, Nov. 4.

“The bridge between Cornish and Windsor was completed on Monday, the last day of October, and the dedication was on Tuesday. The bridge is 521 feet long from the beginning of one abutment to the end of the other and 34 feet wide. It embraces the Connecticut River with two most beautiful arches, each 184 feet 4 inches long, with a pier in the center, 46 feet one way by 41 the other. With the addition of a triangular front extending up the stream about 70 feet at the bottom and gradually diminishing until it comes sufficiently above high water mark so as to defend and break off the ice. It was built under the direction of Spofford and Boynton, who have built several on the Merrimack River. The bridge is believed to be the best of the kind yet built in America and the first of the kind over the Connecticut.”

In the same periodical is the following:—

“Keene, N. H., Dec. 20, 1796.

“On Tuesday last the bridge over West River at Brattleboro was completed and by the best judges it is

considered to be as well calculated both for strength and convenience as any bridge of the same dimensions within the New England States. Its construction is entirely novel, the whole of which was planned and executed under the direction of Messrs. Mack & Wilder. The Bridge is 26 feet in width and 30 feet in height with 2 arches, each of 127 feet, supported in the center by a pier 30 x 26 defended by a dam connected to the pier, the original project of said Mack, which appears well calculated to protect it against every violence of the current and ice. The abutments on each side are timber placed on solid rock to which they are united by bolts and are as is also the pier and dam, filled with stone, upwards of 4,000 tons being used. The bridge contains 30,000 ft. of timber averaging 16 inches square all of which was growing in the forest a little more than 4 months ago. Numerous were the adjacent gentlemen who attended at the dedication who were made fully sensible of the generosity of its owners. The toasts were numerous and expressive of their wishes for its durability as well as several truly Federal. By this bridge, chiefly owned by John W. Blake, Esq., the inhabitants of the county of Windham, but more especially those in the vicinity of Brattleboro must be greatly accommodated."

Again among the communications to the paper:

"Keene, N. H., Nov. 15, 1796.

"Last week as the workmen at West River Bridge, Brattleboro, were leveling the land adjoining the southward abutment they dug up the bones of an Indian with some Indian implements. From the figures cut on the adjacent rocks it appears that the place has been no mean rendezvous of the savages."

The next year the following item relating to Westminster is of interest:



“Keene, N. H., April 4, 1797.

“On the 8th ultimo 17 trees were set on fire by lightning in the north part of Westminster, Vermont, and what is more remarkable, only two claps of thunder were heard during the shower.”

FIRST BRIDGE ACROSS SAXTONS RIVER—  
LOTTERIES FOR BRIDGE BUILDING POPULAR

The first bridge across Saxtons River at any point in its course was near its mouth, almost exactly where the present Boston & Maine bridge is. It was built in 1786, and since that date four highway bridges have crossed the river near this point, as various necessities have arisen.

October 24, 1786, at its session held at Rutland, the Vermont Legislature granted to Benjamin Burt, Eliakim Spooner and Jesse Burke, all of Westminster, the authority to "levy a tax of one penny per acre on each acre of land in Westminster to furnish the funds wherewith to erect the first bridge across the Saxtons river, near its mouth."

A system prevailed early in the settlement of this vicinity, as well as in all New England, of holding lotteries under legal sanction, the profits of which were to be used in defraying many of the large enterprises of the day, as well as many of a more private nature.

In 1797, the people of the town of Rockingham, for the purpose of procuring money to make roads and bridges, chose Dr. Samuel Cutler, Elijah Knight and Levi Sabin "to visit the next General Assembly and petition and pray for a lottery." The same year, in August, Benoni Aldrich petitioned the selectmen, setting forth that "by the great rains, which have fallen of late, the bridge across Saxtons river, so called, was carried away, and the roads and bridges in other places much injured" asking that "a town-meeting be called to see what measures shall be taken for rebuilding the bridge."

At this meeting strong opposition developed "as the river could be forded when the water was low, and in winter it could be crossed on the ice" and consequently no bridge was needed. This resulted in the bridge not being replaced for several years.

FIRST CONNECTICUT RIVER BRIDGES AT  
BRATTLEBORO, CHARLESTOWN, WHITE  
RIVER JUNCTION AND HANOVER

The first bridge across the Connecticut river between Brattleboro, Vt., and Hinsdale, N. H., was erected in November, 1804. The description of it, as well as of an accident that occurred there soon after, and its fall the next year, are recorded in the *Political Observer*, a newspaper printed in Walpole, N. H., at that time.

Under a date line of Brattleboro, December 1, 1804, that paper says:—

“On Tuesday last the new toll bridge over the Connecticut River which connects Brattleboro with Hinsdale in New Hampshire was opened for passengers. The bridge does the highest honor to Mr. Kingsley, the architect, as well as to Mr. Lovel Kelton and the mechanics who executed the work under their direction.

“It has been pronounced to have been erected upon the best plan of any yet put into execution in this part of the Union, combining greater strength with less weight of material and promising more durability.

“From the Vermont side a stone abutment projects from the bank 34 feet wide, 50 feet in length and 34 feet in height, from which is thrown the western arch 124 feet in the arc and resting its eastern end on a stone pier in the channel from which is extended an eastern arch of the same dimensions meeting a similar abutment on Barrit’s Island. Upon the eastern side of the island another bridge 260 feet long with stone abutments and resting on trussels extends the passage to New Hampshire.

“The public are congratulated upon the completion of these useful edifices. Perhaps there are few bridges in the interior which will be so extensively beneficial.

The bridge is connected in the act of incorporation of a turnpike road through Hinsdale, Winchester and Warwick where it unites with the Massachusetts turnpike so that the invalid seeking health or the healthy seeking pleasure may now be transported in a wheeled carriage from Boston to Bennington and so on to Albany and Ballstown Springs entirely upon a turnpike road without the least interruption of even the smallest ferriage, reducing the distance from Boston to Ballstown Springs to 170 miles."

Under its general news head the same paper says under date of December 15, 1804:—

"On Thursday, the 8th ultimo, Isaac Grant, one of the workmen completing the flooring of the new bridge connecting Brattleboro and Hinsdale fell backwards from the center of the western arch into the river. He fell about 30 feet into about 25 feet of water. He could not swim but on rising to the surface he was told not to struggle against the current which being swift carried him some rods below the bridge where he was saved by the exertions of two men who came to his assistance. He was so exhausted that it was some hours before he was restored to his senses.

"The humane activity and determined presence of mind of those who saved the life of this valuable citizen had they lived within the notice of a humane society would doubtless have been honored with a medal. It is only in our power to notice their merit by inserting the names of Jacob Locke of Walpole and Lewis Brewer."

The same paper says on February 16, 1805:—

"We learn that on Thursday last the new bridge lately erected across the Connecticut River between Brattleboro and Hinsdale fell, and was crushed to ruins. The cause is said to have been the great weight of snow lodged on it. The private loss must be heavy and the public inconvenience not small."

Regarding bridges over the river farther north, the "Political Observer" has the following on other dates:—

"October 10, 1806. The bridge between Charlestown and Springfield is completed which will facilitate travel from this town (Walpole) to Windsor."

"March 24, 1804. On Monday night of last week the bridge across the Connecticut river between Hanover, N. H., and Norwich, Vt., fell and was crushed to ruins."

"February 9, 1805. Mr. Elias Lyman of Hartford has erected a bridge across the Connecticut between Lebanon, N. H., and Hartford, Vt. It connects the White River Turnpike with the Fourth New Hampshire Turnpike. Great advantages are promised from this bridge. Its construction is said to be excellent."

## NAVIGATION OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER

A century ago the Connecticut river was an important artery in the transportation problems of all this section of New England, and the stories of the time when the boatman's song echoed through the valley, instead of the locomotive whistle or the honk of the automobile driver, are increasingly interesting as those days recede further into the past, and the present generation knows less of the problems of those days.

Nearly thirty years ago the writer secured the following story of Sumner L. Howard, then 85 years of age, who had spent many years on the river as a boatman, after working here on the locks used in raising and lowering the boats at this point. He said:

“In the years when I was employed on the locks here, the main guard gates stood just where the stone arch highway bridge now stands on Bridge Street. Below this was a section known as the ‘Stone hole’ in which were two locks, the lower gate being opened by a windlass, and the others by long levers. Below this first section of locks, was a large mill pond extending to the grist-mill now owned by Frank Adams & Co., and below that, along where the sulphite and coating mills are now, there was a succession of six more locks, the lower one opening into the eddy at the point where the raceway of the coating mill is. My brother, Harrison Howard, and Jesse Brockway worked in the canal company's saw-mill, standing where the Robertson Paper Company's mill is (the Babbitt & Kelley mill destroyed by the flood of November 4, 1927). When the locks were being used by boats, it took all the water so the mill could not work. At such times, my brother and Mr. Brockway assisted in handling the locks. Four men

were needed to open and close the locks below the grist-mill, and three men those at the 'Stone hole.'

"A large freight business was done for many years between Hartford, Conn., and Bellows Falls by boats that floated down with the current and came back by tug from Hartford to Springfield and from there sailing when the wind was favorable, and poling, or 'snubbing' the boat along when necessary.

"The two boats best known locally engaged in this business were owned here by Col. Asa Wentworth, Jr., of Bellows Falls, and Benjamin Smith of Cambridgeport and were run respectively by Captains Charles and Austin Davenport. The boats were seventy-two feet long, eleven and a half feet wide, and when loaded to their capacity of about thirty tons would draw only two to three feet of water. They were flat-bottomed boats, having a cabin at the stern, a mast in the centre, around which the freight was packed, and with a gunwale extending around the entire boat. The main sail was about twenty feet square and was fastened in its centre, extending some feet each side of the boat. A top sail was about eight feet wide at its bottom, narrowing towards the top. In addition to these a third sail was placed above the top sail in very light winds.

"When the wind was not available as a motive power, the men used long stout poles in pushing the boats along. The man on each side would place one end of the pole firmly on the bottom of the river, and, with the other end against the shoulder, walk from bow to stern, seventy-two feet, thus propelling the boat. When work first began in the spring this caused the shoulders to become very sore, and later there would be callous places upon each shoulder as large as the hand.

"The boats carried down loads of freestone, shingles and other produce, bringing back heavy freight such as iron, sugar, molasses, grindstones, salt, etc., while a specialty was made of new rum during the last of June.

"Boats usually took three days on the downward trip, going as far as Northfield, Mass., the first day, from there



to Springfield the second, and to Hartford on the third. It took much longer to come up the river, the time varying with the wind. The round trip averaged about two weeks. The return trip from 'Miller's Mills,' as they were then called, at the mouth of Miller's river, was once made in a single night. I was on that boat, owned by Mr. Smith and run by Captain Austin Davenport. That night we got through the locks at Miller's behind the Wentworth boat run by Captain Charles Davenport. When the two boats got up as far as Northfield Farms, where we would tie up for the night under ordinary circumstances, Austin said, 'Boys, let's go on by Charles. Don't make any noise and we'll give him a surprise in the morning; I can steer.' So by the light of a full moon and with the aid of a strong south wind, we came along all night arriving at Bellows Falls about day-break. The next night, after getting our boat all unloaded, about dusk we saw Charles' boat coming round the bend south of the eddy. He certainly was surprised, to say nothing of being mad, at thus having the march stolen on him, as he had supposed all day that we were behind him.

“In leaving the canal at Bellows Falls, going down the river, considerable difficulty was often experienced in getting out of the eddy owing to the currents, which were very different from what they now are. I think the average amount of water in the river now is not over forty per cent of what it was in those days. A strong current came down from the falls in the main river, and striking through the middle of the eddy it divided at the lower end, eddying around, so that on both the Vermont and New Hampshire sides of the river the current near the shore actually set strongly up stream. The trouble was to get through this northerly current and into the main stream, especially if a strong south wind was blowing. Boats would often eddy around a number of times, going clear over to the New Hampshire side, often taking many hours before the current could be

struck which would take them out of the eddy. To overcome this difficulty, a post was set in the river at the south end of the eddy and a rope passed through a pulley fastened to it. Old Seth Hapgood, who lived where Miss Ann Hapgood does now, kept a pair of oxen for the purpose of helping boats out of the trouble. He would ride as far into the river as possible on the 'nigh' ox and with the aid of the rope attached to the boat and passed through the pulley on the post, draw the boat out into the right current. It used to be a common saying among the rivermen that 'Old Seth Hapgood prayed every morning for a south wind so boatmen would have to employ him to get them out of the eddy.'

"Mr. Hapgood was also employed by the boatmen coming up the river, using his oxen attached to a long rope to draw the loaded boats over the swift water on the bar at the mouth of Saxtons river. Men now living tell of the competition between the boys of the village in their race to tell Mr. Hapgood of the appearance of boats headed up stream that he might be ready, and the old man never failed of rewarding the first informant with a few pennies.

"At Enfield just over the Connecticut line was a canal to avoid some rocky rapids in the river, and as they were not entirely impassable to boats some of the time, it was a practice to run south bound boats over the rapids, while north bound boats had to use the canal. This was done to save time as well as the canal tolls one way. Special pilots were used who knew the channel among the rocks, and the danger attending the passage led at one time to the formation of a company which, for a premium, would insure the safety of boats there, but I never heard of an accident. At several points, rapids and shoal places required an additional force of men. One of these places was the rapids opposite the village of Walpole and extra men were usually taken down from here to assist, who came back on foot. At some of these places men known as 'swift-water-men'

were taken on to pilot the boats through those particular rapids. Below the locks and 'Severance Hotel' at Turners Falls was a sharp turn in the river, known as 'Honey Pot Eddy' where much trouble was often experienced. Just this side of the ferry at Westmoreland was a peculiarly shaped rock known as 'Whales-back,' while just below Brattleboro were rocks known among the river-men as the 'Geese and Goslings.'

"At practically all points along the river where boats were supposed to stop, the country stores carried a stock of rum in addition to their other merchandise. There was a store building about where Granger block on Westminster Street now stands, the front door opening on Westminster Street and a flight of stairs leading down the back side to the canal. They sold rum in addition to dry goods and often disposed of a barrellful in one morning to the boatmen and raftsmen. This rum was made from distilled molasses and seldom caused drunkenness or fighting. It was sold at twenty-five cents a gallon or three cents a tumbler ( $\frac{1}{2}$  pint). Brandy, gin and West India rum sold at five cents a glass, while whiskey was unknown. In spite of the large amounts of liquor consumed, there was not as much drunkenness as at the present time."

Mr. Howard remembered that among the several attempts to establish steamboat navigation there was a little steamer named the "William Hall" which came here from Hartford. It was too big to go through the locks and it was drawn around through the village by oxen and went up to Windsor. It was drawn back around the falls by oxen on its return trip, and was run for a short time between here and Hartford once a week, but it did not pay and in later years it was used as a tug on the lower part of the river. The records of the Connecticut Valley Steamboat Company show this boat as having

been built at Hartford, Conn., in 1831, and as having been used as a tug below Springfield for many years. It was the boat upon which James Mulligan, late president of the Connecticut River Railroad, was engineer as a young man.

When shown a picture of a boat said to have been one used in that era, Mr. Howard said it was an exact representation of the boat on which he was employed, except that "my boat had a top mast and a top-s'l above the large square one shown in the picture."

The following article tells more about James Mulligan, and the disappointing trial trip of the "William Hall."

## JAMES MULLIGAN'S STEAMER ONCE TRAVELED THE STREETS OF BELLOWS FALLS

During the navigation of the Connecticut river by steam, a steamboat of large size was drawn through the streets of Bellows Falls, because the size of the locks was not large enough to allow it to pass in the water. An interesting fact connected with the episode was that it was the same steamer on which James Mulligan, whom every railroad official of 40 years ago knew as the president of the Connecticut River Railroad, began his transportation experiences as its engineer.

The steamer "William Hall," familiarly spoken of in those days as the "Bill Hall," was built in 1831, and early in its history it came to Bellows Falls as a trial trip, it being supposed it could pass the locks here and go farther north. It was intended to take its place regularly towing the flat boats of the river as far north as Barnet. It came up the river without trouble as far as here, but it was found that these locks were too small and it was decided to have it drawn around the falls from the lower landing to the upper landing at the head of the canal. This was accomplished by eight yoke of oxen and the event was often spoken of in later years. The route was up through Mill Street to the Square, and then through the entire length of Canal Street. It was set afloat again in the broad river above the north end of the canal.

After leaving Bellows Falls on her way north she was able to go as far north as Ottaquechee Falls near Hartland and the trip proved a failure. She came back a few days later and was again drawn through the

Square to the lower landing, and never came as far north again. She was a stern wheel boat similar to those in use on the Mississippi river and was used many years below here for towing and passenger business.

In 1839 James Mulligan, as a boy of 20 years, became engineer on the steamer and used to talk interestingly in his later years of his experiences "on the Bill Hall." It was then used as a tow boat between Hartford and Williamansett. His boat would hitch on to five or six river scows, take them up to the rapids at Holyoke and then drop back to Hartford. It was a seven- or eight-hour trip up the river, but they could go back in half that time. They made two or three trips each week and Saturday nights they usually calculated to get up to Holyoke to stop over Sunday as the captain and fireman lived there in "Ireland Parish." They had a cook and lived on the boat. When the south wind blew, the river scows set their sails and made their own way up the river, the "Bill Hall" being used only when there were head winds or a calm.

Later Mr. Mulligan secured a place on the passenger boat "Phoenix" which ran between Hartford and Springfield. They left Hartford every morning at 8 o'clock and it was a four hours trip going against the current while the trip south starting at 2 o'clock took a little less than three hours. He ran on this boat until November, 1842, when he began work in the newly established Boston & Albany shops in Springfield. In the succeeding January he began his railroad experience as a freight engineer on that road, being promoted in 1848 to a passenger train between Springfield and Worcester. He became master mechanic of the Connecticut River

Railroad in 1852, and his advances on that road were frequent until he served it many years as its president and general manager. All railroad men of his day between White River Junction and Springfield, Mass., knew him intimately.

## BELLOWS FALLS A NOTED FISHING GROUND— FISHING RIGHTS

The first business of any kind with which Bellows Falls is credited was that of fishing, for which it was widely known during the occupancy of the red man, and for many years by his successor, the white man. When the first settlers came the Indians were making a yearly pilgrimage to the falls of the Connecticut river here at the season when the salmon and shad were running up the stream. The traditions of their race indicated this had been done. The white men followed the same business at first, as an important part of the work of a few weeks in the spring of the year.

Because of the rush of the water through the rocky gorge here, the shad were never known to go above the falls, but both the shad and the salmon gathered in the eddy below the falls in great numbers, the water being literally alive with them. The salmon were able with great effort to get through into stiller water above. The building of the dam across the river in 1792 created a barrier for fish, and no fish-way was provided. Since then these varieties of fish have been practically unknown north of here.

In recent years pike have been the largest and best fish in this vicinity. There were no pike in the Connecticut until about 1840, when they are supposed to have come here from "Plymouth Ponds" as then known, now known as Lakes Echo, Amherst and Rescue, they being a part of the Black river emptying into the Connecticut in the town of Springfield. Some years earlier these ponds had been liberally stocked with them and



protected by the state. A flood broke down the barriers and washed many of them down into the Connecticut.

Some of the best records of pike caught here are as follows: Dennis Mackesy of North Walpole caught one January 19, 1921, weighing just 20 lbs., about half way between the dam and the mouth of Williams river, near what is known as rock number three near the New Hampshire shore. He caught it through the ice, using a sucker about 5 inches long as bait. It was of the variety known as a "gray pike" and measured 47 inches in length. In September, 1841, one was caught at the foot of the locks just below the present unoccupied five-story coating mill, which weighed  $18\frac{3}{4}$  pounds. The lucky fisherman was Henry Hills, then a local writing teacher here. Several years ago an elderly man gave the writer a graphic account of the capture which he witnessed. It could not be landed with the line and was shot with a pistol. A banquet of 20 business men of the village was held at the old Stage House, the hotel then standing where Hotel Windham now does, and the fish was served up in great style. About 1844 Hon. William Henry, then cashier of the Bellows Falls Bank, later a member of Congress from this district, caught one in the eddy below the mills weighing 17 pounds. He was one of the most noted fishermen of his day. Business at the bank was not then quite as extensive as now, and, although he was the sole employee of the bank, he would often of a summer day close the bank for an hour or two, posting on the door the information, "Down at the eddy, fishing."

Reliable record is available, with dates, of the catching here at various times of pike weighing all the

way from 10 to the 20-pounder mentioned above, and it is probable "that there are as good ones now here as have ever been caught."

Before the dam was built across the river here, the operations of the Indians were confined mostly to a space of about two miles up the river. At that distance north the water began to be swift and had great velocity down as far as opposite the stone house now occupied by the family of James Hennessey on the Walpole side, where there is now a small eddy. These rapids were difficult of navigation before the dam was built, but two Indians would carry their light bark canoe to the head of these rapids, and launch it. One with his light paddle would sit in the stern and guide it through the devious channel in the current, while the other stood in the prow and drove his spear firmly into the backs of the great salmon, which, having worked hard in coming up thus far through the swift water below, were naturally somewhat spent, and thus not as wary as they would have been below the falls. The fishermen in this way went down the current as far as the Hennessey house, then pulled the canoe out and toted it back up stream to repeat the action hour after hour. In this way salmon weighing from 20 to 30 lbs. are said to have been secured.

An early picture of the toll bridge here shows a rope ladder let down from the bridge with an Indian in a rude chair spearing passing salmon.

The first settlers held what was termed "fishing rights" in different advantageous places in the river as far north as here, and suits at law have been in some instances successful within a few years at different points in Massachusetts, based upon the old fishing rights held

by families since the very earliest residence of the white man. In the eddy below Bellows Falls a number of old residents remember the remains of the old "cheval de frieze" as it was termed, erected by those who claimed the first rights here, to assist in the drawing of the large shad nets. The structure was located about two-thirds of the distance from the mouth of Saxtons river to the lower end of the falls, a little east of the center of the river almost directly opposite the north end of the Liberty Paper Company's manufactory. It was built up of logs about thirty feet square and at ordinary water arose about four feet above the surface. It was filled with heavy stones and in general appearance looked like the log cribs above the dam, except that it had a large post set strongly in the center rising about six or eight feet into the air. This was used for a windlass upon which to wind the ropes of the large shad nets. The stones of this structure have been seen within a few years when the water was extremely low, but it is said the logs were drawn away one year upon the ice after the disappearance of the shad in this vicinity rendered the contrivance of no further value.

The most abundant fish here in early times were the salmon and the shad. The former could pass the rapid waters of the falls, while it is said the shad were never seen above them. Annually in the months of April and May these two species set out from their ocean winter home for the head waters of the Connecticut and its tributaries. They came as far as these falls in great numbers, and as even the salmon could not ascend higher except with the water at a medium height, they gathered in great numbers below the falls, extend-

ing some distance below the eddy so plentifully that it was said: "It seemed as though a person could almost walk across upon their backs, at least the water was perfectly black with them."

The shad nets were often nearly half a mile long, and from 8 to 20 feet deep. To each end of the net was attached a long rope, as long or longer than the net itself. The net would be taken up the river upon one side, the length of the rope, then striking out into the stream the fishermen would row across paying out the net, then return to the cheval-de-frieze with the other end of the rope and wind up the long ropes by means of the windlass, as rapidly as possible, drawing the net over a large space of the "Great Eddy," which in those days was much larger than in recent years. Shad in great numbers were caught in this way. Drawing nets in this manner was continued later farther south than this point, and one record in the river shows over 2,000 shad taken at a single drawing of the net.

On the top of the large rock in the river at the lower end of the falls, known as "The Nine Holes," was a drill hole put there by an owner of fishing rights to draw the nets from, and an early deed refers to "the rock with a drill hole used by the shad fishermen." This is the large rock out in the river which now divides the main channel of the river from the race-way of the power plant.

The traditions of the red men when first the pale-faced settlers came here, were to the effect that the reputation of the "Great Falls" had been known to them generations earlier, and that at certain seasons of the year pilgrimages were made from distant points by

parties of red men to secure generous supplies of a necessary article of food. The first settlers also depended largely upon the river to supply their food a portion of the year, one of the earliest historians stating that fishing was one of the principal industries of the first settlers of Rockingham.

THE CHRISTENING OF MOUNT KILBURN IN 1857  
BY AMHERST, MIDDLEBURY AND DART-  
MOUTH COLLEGES

The mass of rock which rises abruptly from the east bank of the Connecticut at Bellows Falls was early known as "Falls Mountain," later, "Fall Mountain," and it was not until Tuesday, September 23, 1856, that it received its present name, "Mount Kilburn."

The class of '57 of Amherst College, to the number of twenty-nine, came here on the noon train of that day, and early in the afternoon were joined by fifteen members of the class of '57 of Middlebury College, and five or six seniors from Dartmouth. All were guests of the Amherst class, which had inaugurated the movement and were the principals in the exercises, aided by Dr. Stearn, president of Amherst, and the elder Dr. Hitchcock, also of Amherst, one of the most noted geologists of that time. An invitation had been extended to the senior class of Dartmouth to be present also as guests of Amherst, but President Lord had declined to accept.

After dinner at the Island house, the Bellows Falls band headed a procession consisting of the students and a number of local invited guests which marched across the river and to the top of the mountain, Professor Hitchcock calling the attention of those present to certain interesting geological formations during the ascent. After reaching the summit and admiring the beautiful view of the valley from that point, a selection was rendered by the band, and Dr. Stearn in a few words stated the object of the gathering and introduced J. H. Boalt, a member of the Amherst class, as the orator chosen to

perform the christening rites. Mr. Boalt began speaking from a granite platform, when he was accosted by a student purporting to be a New Hampshire man, who objected to the naming of the mountain by those from Massachusetts, giving his reasons therefor. He was followed by another student representing the Vermont people, who gave reasons why such an act as the christening of the mountain should not be done without due regard to Vermonters.

Another in the garb of the Irishman, and imitating well his brogue, expressed great indignation that they should think of "takin' way his mountin." He had squatted on it and the "praste" had told him that this was a free country and that whoever squatted on any part of it could claim it as his own. Being told that the "praste" had given his consent, Patrick waives his claim and tells them "to take the mountin and along wid ye." D. H. Rogan of the Amherst class represented Texas' objections to the ceremony, closing his speech with a tribute to the red man.

I. C. Clapp, also of the class, here came forward clothed from head to foot in Indian costume, representing himself to be the only survivor of a numerous tribe that once roved over these hills and valleys. In a simple and interesting manner he recounted the traditions of his tribe, pointed out their various haunts as seen from the mountain, and in tones of sadness pictured the wrongs that they had suffered at the hands of the pale-face. Appealing to the sympathies of his auditors, he asked if it was not his right to affix a name to this mountain, once the free hunting ground of his tribe. All cried out, "Yes, yes, yes, it is the red man's right."

He only asked that they "give no Indian name to this mountain, for it will only serve to keep in remembrance the wronged red man; soon I shall go where my tribe has already gone, to the land of the Great Spirit; then may we be forgotten."

Mr. Boalt was then allowed to continue his christening oration. This was followed by the class uniting in singing a song "The Titan's Workshop." President Stearn introduced E. G. Cobb of the class, who delivered a second oration, after which A. L. Frisbee, also of the class, was introduced as the poet of the day. After his poem was recited, the exercises on the mountain were terminated by the concluding blessing and invocation for the future pronounced by Dr. Hitchcock in a very impressive manner, as told by those present.

Later in the afternoon the Amherst students and their guests had a notable banquet at the Island House, then managed by C. R. White. The toastmaster of the occasion was H. W. Jones, of the class, who brought out various responses to sentiments from members of the classes of the two colleges, from Rev. Dr. Clap, rector of Immanuel church, and Rev. Samuel E. Day, pastor of the local Congregational church. Also among the speakers were A. N. Swain and Hiram Atkins, the editors of the two Bellows Falls newspapers at that time, and a dozen or more members of the college classes. It was early evening before the party broke up and the college men departed, closing one of the memorable days in the history of Bellows Falls.



THE "POVERTY YEAR" OR "COLD YEAR" OF  
1816—A WALPOLE, N. H., INCIDENT

In the year 1816 throughout practically the entire United States there was frost every month and snow fell to quite a depth in New England during June. In one town a man was lost in a June blizzard while hunting for his sheep and froze to death.

The result of this was that this whole vicinity suffered many hardships from failure of the crops. Breadstuffs commanded almost prohibitive prices throughout this and nearby towns. Most of the farmers lost even their seed for the succeeding season.

Among the few farmers in New England who had a good crop of corn that year was "Squire" Thomas Bellows of our neighboring town of Walpole, N. H., son of Benjamin Bellows, the second settler in that town. He owned and lived on the place now known as the "Stage Coach Inn," two miles south of Bellows Falls. He had more corn and other produce than he needed for his own use, and what he had to spare he sold in small quantities at the same price as in years of plenty, to such men as needed it for their families. In many instances he accepted labor of the purchaser in place of the cash which the purchaser often could not command.

One day a speculator called on Mr. Bellows to inquire his price for corn. He was much surprised to learn that it was no more than in years of plenty, and he quickly said he would take all that Mr. Bellows had to spare. "You cannot have it," said the worthy citizen. "If you want a bushel for your family, you can have it at my price but no man can buy of me to speculate in this year of scarcity."

## WARM WINTER OF 1827 RECOUNTED BY WILLIAM HALE, GRANDSON OF COL. ENOCH HALE

During the years of 1826-27, the climatic conditions in this section of New England were very peculiar. One of the most serious freshets along the courses of the smaller rivers, which there was then record of, occurred March 25, 1826, causing much damage. A grandson of Col. Enoch Hale, who built the first toll bridge across the Connecticut river here, William Hale, who died at the age of 90 years, often told during the last years of his life of the conditions following the spring freshet.

He said the spring of 1826 was an average forward one with plenty of rain up to the first of June. After that time no rain fell until about September 10. The entire summer was extremely hot, and was many years thereafter known as "the grasshopper season," the crops in most of the places in this section being ruined by that pest, and it was necessary to harvest all that could be secured before they were ripe. The meadows and pastures looked as if a fire had scorched them. About the 10th of September, it began to rain slowly, and as the weather was warm, grass started up and grew very rapidly. So good was the warm weather and grass growing rapidly, the farmers kept their stock out and in good fresh feed until January 8, 1827, the grass being as good as in June. With no frost to kill the grass, it died of old age.

About January 10, 1827, there came about 15 inches of snow, the ground not being frozen at all. In a few days there came about as much more, and on the first of February, there was nearly three feet of snow on a

level in all this vicinity. The 20th of February (which was Mr. Hale's 22nd birthday), he said that Ira Gowing, a neighbor living near him at Walpole, N. H., was plowing with two yoke of oxen on the "Petty place," so called, in sight of his father's house; the snow was all gone except where there were drifts, and there was no frost in the ground. During Mr. Hale's long life in this vicinity, he said he had seen only two other Christmases and New Years that were as warm and pleasant, but in both those seasons they had a much colder average fall and winter.

Mr. Hale was for over 50 years a civil engineer and surveyor in this vicinity. His father, Sherburne Hale, owned the farm now covered by the bustling village of North Walpole, N. H., opposite Bellows Falls. The farm consisted of 800 acres, which was sold to Levi Chapin, a relative of the noted Springfield (Mass.) Chapin family. The land was thickly covered with a fine quality of old growth pine, and Mr. Chapin, being interested in lumber business, shipped down the Connecticut river large amounts. The result was that a large number of the buildings at Springfield, Mass., erected between 1810 and 1850, were from lumber cut on this North Walpole farm, sawed at a small saw mill owned by the Chapins and located on "Governor's Brook," which flows through that village. Among the papers of Levi Chapin were recently found the specifications, and bills, for one of the churches of that city.

SPOTTED FEVER EPIDEMIC IN NEW ENGLAND  
IN 1812—SERIOUS IN ROCKINGHAM

This entire section of New England, if not a much larger area, during the spring seasons of 1812 and 1813, was scourged by a fearful epidemic, called at first "spotted fever" and later "malignant fever." So great were its ravages that the deaths in Vermont reached 6,000 by this disease alone, or about one death in 40 inhabitants. The disease is supposed to be the same as that now called cerebro-spinal-meningitis, and was not then considered contagious. During the time the epidemic raged there were 70 deaths at Bennington; Pomfret and Reading each had 44; and Shrewsbury about 30. In the month of March, 1813, seven persons died in the town of Walpole in as many days and great excitement and fear prevailed in all this section of the Connecticut valley. In the town of Rockingham the most prominent physician was Dr. Joshua Ripley Webb, who lived in the small dwelling east of the old Rockingham meeting house, now occupied by his descendants. He was one of the victims of this terrible disease. He was attacked suddenly while on his daily rounds among the afflicted ones and became unconscious while in his buggy. His faithful horse continued upon its way and brought the stricken doctor to the door of his own home where he survived only a few hours. He was son of Joshua Webb, one of the earliest and most prominent men of the town.

An illustration of some methods of treatment of this disease (not however by Dr. Webb) was shown in later years among the papers of Capt. Charles Church, who was a wealthy and leading citizen of Westminster.

It is a receipt which was reported to be one of the most efficacious of any used at that time. Certainly if the patients survived the medicine, they surely ought to have survived the disease.

“Cure for Spotted Fever—To one quart of lime add one gallon of water. To one quart of tar add two quarts of water. Let these stand in separate vessels until they froth, skim the froth, pour them together. To this mixture add eight ounces of saltpeter, four ounces of opium—take a glass when going to bed and repeat the same in four or five hours.”

## A MAN WHO HAD 386 DIRECT DESCENDANTS LIVING WHEN HE DIED—JOSIAH WHITE

A tombstone in the old burying ground at Rockingham, a few feet from the northwest corner of the Old Meeting-house, bears a unique epitaph, the record contained being probably unequalled by any family in New England, if not in the United States. It shows a line of achievement of one of the very earliest settlers in the town, but it was not all he accomplished in life by any means.

The epitaph reads as follows:

### “JOSIAH WHITE

“In Memory of Mr. Josiah White who died Sept. 1, 1806,  
in the 96th year of his age.

“The descendants of Josiah White at his death. Children 15, Grandchildren 160, Grate-Grandchildren 211. Children deceased 2, Grand-Children deceased 26, Grate-grandchildren deceased 35.”

Mr. White was born at Lancaster, Mass., January 3, 1714, and he built the first mill in that part of Lancaster, which was later set off to Leominster. He later lived for a time at Charlestown, N. H., and probably removed to Rockingham about 1773, as he in that year purchased real estate in town and took the oath of allegiance to the new government in 1777. He was of the little band from Rockingham that marched to Manchester the same year. His name frequently appears upon the town records as taking an active part in public matters of his time. His home farm was in the north part of the town, the same recently owned and occupied by Chester B. Hadwin. A part of the original house is now used as

a corn barn in the rear of the brick building that was erected by Mr. White's son, Phineus.

Mr. White enjoys the distinction of being probably the progenitor of a greater number of people than any other man resident here during the history of this town, and an excellent genealogy of the "descendants of John White 1638-1900," written by the late Miss Myra L. White of Haverhill, Mass., records his descendants to the number of 2,663 up to about 25 years ago. The number must have materially increased since. Her compilation of the descendants of the emigrant John, three generations further back, showed the unusually prolific qualities of the family to a grand total of 19,629 up to that date, and there has since been a third volume added.

Mr. White was prominent in the First Church of Rockingham and one of his descendants a few years ago placed a beautiful tablet on the square "pigpen" pew which was occupied many years by him and members of his family.

A MARBLE MONUMENT FOR A DOG IN THE  
WESTMINSTER CEMETERY—WILLIAM CZAR  
BRADLEY, AN EMINENT CITIZEN

In the village cemetery at Westminster, across the avenue from the granite shaft erected by the state of Vermont as a memorial to the martyrs of the 1775 massacre, William French and Daniel Houghton, is the large tomb in which the ancestors of the Bradley and Kellogg families lie. At the southeast corner of this tomb, and attached to it, is a small marble slab which bears this inscription, which is often wondered at by the visitor: "To Our Gentle, Kind and Faithful Penny."

"Penny" was a dog, much beloved and an inseparable companion of Hon. William Czar Bradley, one of the leading lawyers of Vermont who resided in Westminster practically his entire life. He for several years represented this district in the Congress of the United States. The affection which he lavished upon his little companion was a most pathetic and interesting side-light to the life of a most eminent and widely famed man. Many most interesting and amusing incidents in which Mr. Bradley and his dog figured were often told among his friends and intimate associates of the bar. The memorial stone was first erected at the grave of the dog at the little mound in the front yard of the ancestral home of the family, which still stands farther south at the corner of School Street.

The late Judge Daniel Kellogg of Westminster, a descendant, used to tell of the dog frequently accompanying Mr. Bradley into the court room. On one of these occasions, when Mr. Bradley had made one of his eloquent



pleas, he took his seat and as usual little Penny jumped into his master's lap. His opponent, desirous of displaying his forensic ability, commenced his reply in a loud voice and with wild gesticulations. Then little Penny from his seat in his master's lap became interested evidently in the discussion and commenced a furious barking. The old orator patted the little dog on the head and said in a voice loud enough to be heard all over the court room, "Hist! hist! Penny, only one dog at a time." Suppressed laughter from the bar filled the court room, and even a broad smile illuminated the countenance of the dignified judge, while the young lawyer sank back crestfallen and dumbfounded. He never completed his plea.

Mr. Bradley, although a man of immense research and quaint intellect, was peculiarly superstitious. On one occasion he was driving on his way to the county seat at Newfane with Mr. Kellogg. It was a bright spring morning and all at once Mr. Bradley exclaimed, "Hold on. We must kill that snake," and immediately sprang out of the buggy, cane in hand, and as quickly as he could chased the meandering varmint into a high stone wall. With Mr. Kellogg's help the old gentleman tore down more than a rod of the stone wall before the snake was found and killed. Mr. Kellogg being surprised at the persistence of Mr. Bradley in his search for the snake inquired how long he would have worked if they had not found the snake, when Mr. Bradley quickly replied, "I would have hunted for him until dark if we had not found him, otherwise I should have lost every case this term "

It was in the old Bradley mansion that Ethan Allen, early one morning, married his second wife, Mrs. Buchanan. This Frances Buchanan was the step-daughter of the detested and noted Tory, Crean Brush. John Norton, the proprietor of the Tory Tavern, was a guest at this wedding breakfast, and is said to have humorously remarked to Allen, "General, I understand that you do not believe there is a God, or heaven, or hell." Allen mused a moment, and then turning a stern eye on Norton replied, "No, John; I believe there is a hell—for Tories."

Hon. Stephen Rowe Bradley, the father of William Czar, and Moses Robinson were the first U. S. Senators from Vermont. Mr. Bradley was five times elected president pro tem of the senate, and was a close friend and adviser of Presidents Jefferson and Madison. He was a graduate of Yale in 1775, served as an officer in the War of the Revolution, locating in Westminster in 1779. From that time the name of Bradley has been held in high estimation in that town in all the succeeding generations. Very many mementos of their life here, and the liberality of their descendants, abound in various parts of the town.

William Czar Bradley died in the old homestead March 3, 1867, and his little law office on the adjacent grounds remains in exactly the same condition in which he left it, library, furniture and pictures, yes, even his straw hat he last wore hangs on the wall as he left it.

THE DAVID R. CAMPBELL LEGACY FUND AND  
ITS DONOR—OTHER BENEFACTIONS

A century ago at this time there was a young man named David R. Campbell, clerking in the general country store of Hall & Goodridge, in Mammoth Block on the south side of the Square (now occupied by J. J. Fenton & Co.), who did things in later years that have caused him to be remembered with gratitude by thousands, and will so continue in the years to come. He gave to his native town of Rockingham \$20,000 to be invested, and the income to be devoted annually to relieving the needs of the poor. In addition he gave an aggregate of \$48,000 to nine other towns in this section of Windham and Windsor counties for similar purposes. The Rockingham gift is invested at 5% interest and the income is devoted by the trustees to the relief of needy persons who are not town charges. Last year's report shows 34 different families and persons of this town assisted to the amount of \$842.38, and a balance left over for future use. The fund is known as the "David R. Campbell Legacy Fund," and the distribution is made by three trustees elected by the town annually.

Mr. Campbell was born on a farm in the north part of the town April 25, 1794. His education was in the common schools of the town, supplemented by a few terms at Chester Academy. He taught school several years, the last term being in Bellows Falls in the old brick school house then located on Westminster Street near where the Gates garage is now. He was then employed several years in the Hall & Goodridge store, thus

beginning about 1823 a mercantile career in which he amassed a comfortable fortune in the later years of his life. In 1832 he went to Boston and became a member of the firm of Charles Valentine & Co., on South Market Street, extensive dealers in salted provisions, having large slaughtering works at Alton, Ill. In 1854 he withdrew from the firm and spent the remainder of his life, 31 years, in the family of a nephew, Col. Hiram Harlow of Windsor, who was for many years the superintendent of the Vermont State Prison. He never married, and his death occurred at the Harlow home February 19, 1885, at the advanced age of 92.

He was a tall, well formed old man, slightly stooping, face clean shaven, and with "banged hair" that was only slightly gray; he became a familiar figure upon the streets of Windsor. Recollections of those who knew him, letters written by him to the writer of this, and all other sources of information indicate this benefactor of this and neighboring towns to have been a peculiarly kind-hearted man, with a beautiful nature, always noted for his strict integrity and honesty. Just before his death, a Boston paper gave an account of his returning to a tailoress who had made him a coat 50 years before, the amount of the bill and 50 years' interest added thereto. The bill amounted to only "three-and-nine-pence," and when he'd gone to pay it 50 years before she had not been in. As they both soon left town he failed to settle, but he always bore it in mind and paid it to her the first time he saw her, after a lapse of fifty years.

The other towns to which Mr. Campbell made similar but smaller gifts were Windsor, Grafton, Westminster, Athens, Chester and Springfield while he lived, and by his will to Baltimore, Weathersfield, West Windsor and Hartland.

A similar gift of a smaller amount, and for the same purposes, was made to the Village of Bellows Falls in 1895 by Luther G. Howard, many years a well known hardware dealer here, as a perpetual memorial to his deceased wife. The amount was \$10,000. It is held by trustees in the same manner, and known as the "Sarah Burr Howard Fund."

In April, 1901, the heirs of Dr. Daniel Campbell and John Robertson, earlier leading residents of the town, presented to Rockingham an expensive town clock of the Seth Thomas make, and a bell connected therewith. These were placed in the tower of the opera house block in Bellows Falls, and bore the following inscription: "Presented to the town of Rockingham in memory of Daniel Campbell and John Robertson, by their heirs, April, 1901." This clock was destroyed by the fire of May 10, 1925, but the bell was saved. The town voters authorized the selectmen to expend \$3,000 for another clock to be placed in the tower of the new town hall completed in September, 1927, and it was done, but before the \$3,000 was paid they received a check for that amount, to be used for the purpose, from Hon. Charles N. Vilas, a wealthy and public-spirited citizen of our neighboring village of Alstead, N. H. The bell given by the Campbell and Robertson heirs is the one still in use in the new tower, and bears the above inscription.

In 1905 Andrew Carnegie, the noted philanthropist, notified the town he would give it \$15,000 with which to erect a library building, if it would furnish a suitable site for it. This was done and the building now in use for the purpose on Westminster Street was built as a result.

## CAPT. GREEN AND COL. FLEMING PLAYED WHIST FOR CHOICE OF RESIDENCES

Recent changes relating to the Rockingham Hospital property, whereby the hospital has two entrances to its grounds, one from Westminster Street where it has always been and a new one from Saxtons River Street at the top of the terrace, brings to the recollection of a few of the older citizens some interesting facts relating to the hospital building and the adjacent one now owned by James H. Williams.

These two prominent and sightly buildings were built by Capt. Henry F. Green and Col. Alexander Fleming, who, under the firm name of Green & Fleming were many years the agents for the management interests of the Bellows Falls Canal Company, under the Atkinson ownership, and many years connected with the early paper manufacturing of the village, owning and managing the large paper mill that was the only one here a century ago. Both married daughters of John Atkinson, the Englishman who built the canal. In their business relations they were very intimate, as well as in family relations.

A century ago, in the year 1829, they built the two residences, long known as the "Two Mansions," as they were the most sightly and expensively built of any here in those days. They built the two houses exactly alike, and with the firm's money. Not until they were completed was it known which one each would occupy. When ready for occupancy they agreed between themselves that the question of occupancy should be settled by a "rubber of whist," to which the gentlemen

sat down. Capt. Green won the game and so was entitled to the first choice between the homes. He chose the one now occupied for the hospital, and it has had important improvements and additions made to it. So conscientious were they in dividing their property that where one had more land in front of his house the other had more in the rear, each having a right of way around the other's house, and a portion of this right of way has recently been made a regular highway in order to reach the hospital through the Williams property, so the entrance is available now from Saxtons River Street. The original deeds provided that a right of way should be kept open from the "Basin" in the rear "wide enough for a yoke of oxen to pass."

Both these buildings had very high and large pillars in front which were turned by hand in the old saw mill that then stood about where the present Claremont Paper Company's mill stands under the hill. The turning was done by Powers Crossett, father of the late Augustus P. Crossett, who was the toll gatherer at the bridge from 1837 to 1849. The pillars on the Williams residence are the same ones, but those of the hospital were replaced by new ones in 1900, while the place was used as the residence of the late John W. Flint. In 1900, when digging the cellar for the hospital ell, an immense brick cistern was discovered, built in the shape of a bottle, 10 or 12 feet deep, and a similar one was found near the stable, now used for the Nurses' Home. Both were used for the storage of rain water in the dry seasons of early times, to be used for domestic purposes.

In early days there were several flights of stairs running down the terraces, in front of what is now the



hospital, which were kept nicely painted and made a material addition to the locality. One of the first pictures of Bellows Falls, of which there are two or three still in existence, "From Nature and on Stone, by Mrs. Webber," shows these two mansion houses as the principal feature of the landscape, although the perspective is faulty to a great degree.

Captain Henry F. Green received his title from having been captain of various ships engaged in commercial business and became a resident of Bellows Falls about 1819, while Col. Alexander Fleming earned his title by service in the War of 1812, and came to Bellows Falls two years before his warm friend, Capt. Green. The Fleming homestead north of Immanuel church was erected in 1826, and became his home in his later years. It is still in the ownership of his great-grandson, Richard F. Barker. Col. Fleming was clerk of the Bellows Falls Canal Company 47 years, and died here in 1867. Green & Fleming were the owners of the old paper mill which was burned in 1846, and from that time Bellows Falls had no paper mill within its limits until William A. Russell came here in 1869 and organized the Fall Mountain Paper Company, which was merged into the International Paper Company in 1898.

**DANIEL WEBSTER SPOKE IN BELLOWS FALLS  
THE DAY AFTER THE STRATTON CONVENTION**

Wednesday, July 8, 1840, Daniel Webster spoke in Bellows Falls to an audience which at that time was probably the largest gathering of people ever held in this immediate vicinity. He was on his way back from the memorable convention held on Stratton mountain. He spoke from the upper piazza of the Mansion House, a hotel that, from 1826 until it was burned in 1857, stood on the west side of the Square, the front piazza of which was where the front of the store occupied by Fenton & Hennessey now is.

Rockingham citizens had been very active in making and carrying out the arrangements for the great "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too" or "Hard Cider" convention at Stratton and had taken their full share in the arrangements for, and the carrying out of, this monster gathering, which numbered several thousand people, on the side of the mountain between Windham and Bennington counties the day before.

Throughout the convention, the late Capt. Walter Taylor of Bellows Falls was the chief marshal of the Rockingham forces and assisted many other delegations in a similar capacity. William Henry of Bellows Falls, later a member of Congress, was on a committee upon resolutions of the convention, and was nominated as its candidate for presidential elector, to which position he was later elected. Cyrus Locke, a prominent citizen of Saxtons River, was one of the vice-presidents of the convention and John W. Moore, editor of the Bellows Falls Gazette, was one of the secretaries. It was estimated

that at least 250 people attended the convention from this town.

Up to the time of the assembling of the convention no arrangement had been made, nor had it been deemed possible that Daniel Webster would visit Bellows Falls. On account of the prominent part which Rockingham took in the convention, and at the urgent request of its large delegation, Mr. Webster, Tuesday morning, decided he would return this way and speak to a Bellows Falls audience Wednesday afternoon. Although the notice was very short, and there were no telephones or telegraph in those days, a crowd estimated at over three thousand people had gathered, filling the whole public square as far down Bridge and Westminster Streets as the eye could reach.

It was the middle of the afternoon before the barouche that brought Mr. Webster, coming by the way of Grafton, Cambridgeport and Saxtons River, reached the Mansion House where he was entertained while here. Its proprietor at that time was Capt. Theodore Griswold.

Mr. Webster soon appeared upon the upper balcony of the hotel and, being introduced, spoke in his expressive and eloquent manner for about an hour and a half. A number of those present have told the writer many years ago of the breathless silence of the great audience, except when they gave forth their mighty cheers. Gates Perry, Jr., of Saxtons River and Deputy Sheriff Timothy H. Hall of Westminster kept order, and tradition says you could have heard a pin drop in any part of the Square.

During Mr. Webster's stay in Bellows Falls it is known that he went into two other houses besides the

hotel These were the house on the Old Terrace now owned by James H. Williams, then by Solon Grout, a prominent politician of those days, and the small house near the south end of Atkinson Street known as the Charles Hapgood house, now owned by A. G. Rice. Mr. Webster went from here to Keene where he spoke the next day to a large audience.

The Mansion House, where Mr. Webster was entertained and from which he spoke, was built by James I. Cutler & Co. in 1826 and was destroyed by fire November 17, 1857.

## DANIEL WEBSTER AT STRATTON IN 1840 SLEPT AT LUTHER TORREY'S HOUSE

Everything pertaining to the visit of Daniel Webster to this section of the Connecticut river valley July 6 to 8, 1840, when he spoke on Stratton Mountain on the 7th, is of lasting interest to all citizens of this locality. Many stories are told regarding it every year which have little foundation in fact, so when reliable facts are found it is well that they become history.

A letter of much importance in this regard has recently come to light, written July 11, 1907, by E. M. Torrey, an aged man then living in East Dorset, Vt. He was son of Luther Torrey of Stratton at whose house he relates that Mr. Webster spent the night before his noted speech. It disposes of some of the amusing traditions which were being circulated about the time the letter was written.

He says:—

“Dear Sir: Sixty-seven years ago, July 7, 1840, the people of Brattleboro were up, out, around and astir uncommonly early. The ‘godlike’ Daniel Webster had spent the night of the 6th there and the Tippecanoe & Tyler Too club, of which young Mr. Frederick Holbrook, now our venerable ex-governor, was president, and some one hundred others, were to escort him to Stratton, where he was that day to address an outdoor mass Whig convention on the issues of the campaign. Many errors about this convention have appeared in print.

“\* \* \* The site of the ‘Webster Grandstand’ was a natural amphitheatre in a rough pasture, a little north of a good stage road and three miles east of the top of the Green Mountains and three-fourths of a mile east of White’s saw mill, now Grout’s, so-called,

on Deerfield river. The mill and pasture were owned by Phineas White of Putney. Mr. Webster spoke Saturday, July 4, 1840, in Barre, Mass., came to Brattleboro Monday, the 6th, to Stratton the 7th and spoke in Bel-lows Falls the 8th.

“Brattleboro’s ‘prancing cavalcade of horsemen’ didn’t prance through her streets in honor of Daniel Webster July 5, 1840, as in print, for that day was Sunday. More likely they were singing ‘Auld Lang Syne’ and the ‘Doxology.’ Nobody knows where in Brattleboro Mr. Webster spent the night, July 6, or where he dined at the Stratton convention. Maybe it was at Luther Torrey’s, next house east of the grounds where he stopped on his way to address the convention and where he spent the night after the rally. Maybe he dined on the stand he was to speak on—there was plenty of room—and maybe in ‘a large tent,’ but that tent wasn’t ‘pitched on the summit of the mountain.’ That summit was an unbroken forest then as now and always except by the road and three miles distant. Maybe and more likely he dined with his new-made political friends in the log cabin, 100 feet long from north to south and 50 feet wide, cut in two width-wise by a drive for teams.

“It is in print that Mr. Webster spent the night after the rally in West Wardsboro at the private house of a stranger. Guess not. And that that stranger set fire to his only cigar and ‘after puffing at the weed some little time’ handed the residue to Mr. Webster, who finished it, ‘appreciating the luxury.’ He did not. He had such an offer on the steps of the hotel at West Wardsboro, where he stopped on his way to the convention, but declined with thanks. In 60½ years the story grew to the improbable and nauseating dimensions as above. Mr. Webster was remote from his teens. He had traveled from Brattleboro to the Stratton convention 37 miles, by the winding of streams or over mountain spurs; had been lionized all the way; had addressed a

multitude of nineteen or twenty thousand, and had loaned his ears there and everywhere from dawn in Brattleboro to dark in Stratton to 'Hip, hip, hurrahs.' He didn't travel back seven miles to West Wardsboro. In the early darkness after the rally he, with another, entered the southwest corner room of Luther Torrey's near the rally grounds, and the candles were soon put out and he there pillowed his big, weary head in 'tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep' till the coming dawn.

“August 16, 1901, there were assembled, as per a newspaper report, on the Webster convention grounds 1,000 people, mostly from the East. As they passed the site of Luther Torrey's they saw posted 'Where Webster stayed.' Those who posted the notice knew and know the stubborn fact.”

## EARLY SCHOOLS IN ROCKINGHAM

The erection during the past two years of the new Bellows Falls High School building at an expense of \$275,000 marks a long step from the primitive school system, buildings and practices, of the early settlers of this town and others in the Connecticut river valley.

The town records show that the first effort to establish a school in Rockingham was unsuccessful. In the warning for the town meeting of December 12, 1774, was an article,—

“4th, to see if the Town is willing to hier a School Master to Teach our Childering three months this Winter and to Chuse a Committee for that purpose and to see if the Town will raise any Sum of money or Grane for that purpose,” and it was “Voted In the Negative.”

In 1794 the town was divided into ten school districts, and later into eighteen. The territory now covered by the incorporated village of Bellows Falls was at first known as the “South-east District” and later as “District No. 1.” The first movement for organizing district No. 1, and establishing a school, dates from March 24, 1800, when the following paper, which is still in existence, was circulated:

“We the subscribers being desirous to have a School Kept in our neighborhood the insuing season do hereby appoint Daniel Farrand and Quartus Morgan a Committee to hire some sutable place to be by them provided for six months from the time shall begin and we severally engage and promise to pay the Committee our proportion of the expense of hireing & boarding such woman and of preparing a Room for the purpose according to the number of Scolars we subscribe for.”



This was signed by 10 citizens having 19 pupils. Mr. Farrand, who was a Judge of the Vermont Supreme Court in 1813-4, paid for two, and Mr. Morgan, who was an early tavern keeper here, also paid for two. The first school building was later erected north of the village, about ten rods southeast of the two dwellings now owned by Arthur B. Anderson. The location is shown by a slight depression which was a few years ago temporarily marked, later the post removed. It was beside the old highway, as it ran previous to the building of the Rutland railroad, five or six rods east of the present highway.

The records of the district now known as the "Lawrence Mills District" on the Williams river, show that district to have been organized in 1801, and the school was kept in the dwelling of Samuel Emery, who then owned the mills. In 1822 a new building was proposed and it was "voted to build a school house twenty-six feet long and twenty feet wide with a poarch six feet square," but later in the same meeting the size was changed to twenty-four feet long and twenty feet wide, the voters evidently feeling the first dimensions were extravagant to accommodate the eighty scholars then in the district. The contract was let to Robert Finlay to erect the building for \$218.00, some of the specifications being to be of brick, the main room eight feet high, with two fire places one at each end, "Swinglass windows in the body of the house twenty lights in each window two rows of seats on each side Suitable for writing Scholars one ditto for small scholars \* \* \* Said rooms to be ceiled overhead and the walls not plastered The house and poarch to be finished by the first of December next in a

plain workmanlike manner Suitable to teach school in pay to be made in graine in the month of January next. To be shingled with good white pine Shingles.”

The total expense of the school in this district for the year 1852 was \$97.65, made up as follows: “12 weeks school taught by female at \$1.25 per week, \$15, 12 weeks by male do \$39. Cost of board, 36. cost of wood 7.65” The number of scholars in the district in 1853 was fifty-five, while at the present time there are only a few pupils in the district and they are being transported to other schools.

The records of the school meeting October 8, 1853, show the following action:

“10 ly Voted to set up the board at auction and the lowest bidder to board the teachers. Alby Buss has the first two weeks at \$1.75. Lucious Estabrook 3 and 4, 1.74½. George W. Morrison 5, 6, 7, 1.75. Timothy Lovell the remainder 1.90 Raymond Brockway boards the female for \$1.25 per week”

The question of heating the school house was much discussed. Some years the district voted not to furnish wood to the heat the building. In 1807 they voted \$14. for “getting wood for the support of the school, and voted that each and every person taxed should have the privilege of paying his or her rates in good merchantable hard wood, cut three feet long and split suitable for the fire in said school house if delivered at said school house by the 10th day of January, the price to be \$1.00 per cord.”

The teachers usually “boarded around,” the board being credited on the taxes in place of so much cash. In 1822 it was “voted that the board of the master and

mistress be set at \$1.00 per week and if any man would rather pay the money than board, let him pay it.”

These early records are typical of those in all the districts of the town, and show a great contrast with those of the town in the present day, with its more than a thousand pupils this year, and an expenditure of over a quarter of a million dollars for one school building last year, added to an annual cost of the town schools of over \$83,000.00.

## LELAND &amp; GRAY SEMINARY AT TOWNSHEND

This section of Vermont has three schools for secondary education of a high grade of efficiency besides the various high schools in the different towns. They are, in the order of their establishment, Leland & Gray Seminary at Townshend, Black River Academy at Ludlow and Vermont Academy at Saxtons River. Both Leland & Gray and Black River are nearing the century mark since their establishment.

Leland & Gray was opened in the autumn of 1835, the movement for its establishment being sponsored by the Woodstock (Vt.) Baptist Association of churches, the leaders in the movement being Rev. Joseph Freeman of Cavendish and Major Ezekiel Ransom of Townshend. Its first name was the "Leland Classical Institution of Townshend," so named in honor of Rev. Aaron Leland, who, in his day, was one of the most outstanding men in the state of Vermont in civic, religious and political affairs. He was born in Holliston, Mass., in 1761. In 1787 he established a Baptist church in Chester and soon became one of the most outstanding preachers of his day, traveling all over southeastern Vermont organizing churches, ordaining ministers, etc. He was an acknowledged leader in the Woodstock Baptist Association. He served many years as town clerk and treasurer of Chester; was justice of the peace and judge of Windsor county court; represented Chester nine years in the legislature, three of which he was speaker of the house; four years was in the Governor's Council; five years lieutenant governor, repeatedly refusing the nomination as governor; and was prominent in Masonry, attaining

to the office of grand master. He received an honorary degree of M. A. from Middlebury College, and the same honorary degree from Brown University, although he was not a college graduate himself. He died in Chester in 1832 after a life-time pastorate there of over forty-six years.

The name was several years ago changed to Leland & Gray Seminary in honor of Deacon Samuel Gray, a prominent citizen of Townshend and a staunch supporter of the institution.

The seminary has passed through many vicissitudes, the most serious experience being the burning of the buildings April 26, 1894, together with a large part of the village of Townshend, but it was rebuilt in a much improved manner.

The catalogue shows 136 boys and girls in attendance its first year, in 1836, and twenty years later, in 1856, it showed a total of 257 names, indicating the widespread interest and patronage of the institution. Many of the trees now standing on the common of the village were set out by the pupils of those early days. Those old catalogues show some peculiarities. Among the titles of some of the teachers were "Teacher of Monochromatic, Polychromatic Painting and Head Drawing," "Teacher of Ornamental Branches" and "Preceptress of the Female Department." Among the books listed as used by the seminary were many familiar to the older residents of today, but not known by younger generations. Among them were "Smith's Grammar," "Colburn's and Bailies Algebra," "Comstok's Chemistry," and "Phylosophy." For a time, even instruction in the art of making hair wreaths was advertised for the bene-

fit of the clever grandmothers of today. For the first 15 years or more the school owned a boarding house and pupils largely were boarded by families which had leased the building, but this was discontinued and the building sold in 1861. Also for the first two decades of the school there were weekly, or fortnightly, compulsory forensic lyceums at which every member of the student body was required to declaim. So strictly was this rule adhered to that one promising boy is said to have been expelled for refusing to take part in the lyceum. Many of the original copies of the speeches prepared and delivered are preserved by the institution, and among them is one of Hon. E. L. Waterman, who later became a chief justice of the Vermont Supreme Court, now residing in Brattleboro.

In 1859 the price of board and room was from \$1.25 to \$1.50 a week, but during the Civil War it advanced to \$4.00 and \$4.50 in private families. The present prices although higher are modest as compared with similar schools elsewhere, and with the excellent standing from an educational standpoint the institution looks forward to many years of valuable service. Many eminent men of the past have received their early training here. The Honor Roll of Leland & Gray shows 52 in the World War, of whom one was killed in action and one died in service.

The present principal is Vernon C. Pinkham, M.S., of Iowa State College, and Miss Mary L. Plumb, B.S., of Mount Holyoke College, is vice-principal, she having occupied the position 22 years. The president of the board of trustees is Guy W. Powers of Athens, Vt., who was principal from 1911 to 1916.

“ST. AGNES HALL” A FORMER POPULAR  
YOUNG LADIES’ BOARDING SCHOOL

The \$275,000 high school building recently built is the third school to be erected on the corner of School and Cherry Streets in Bellows Falls within the last 60 years. A long rambling two-story frame building which had served as one of the earlier dwellings of the place, stood on this particular site until its removal in 1895 to make way for the high school building destroyed by fire in 1926. For the 22 years between 1867 and 1889 this was occupied as a young women’s boarding school. During the last 20 years of its existence the school was under the direction of Miss Jane Hapgood and the standard of efficiency was high. Hundreds of women scattered over the world look back with pleasure to the school days passed there.

The school was under the patronage of the Episcopal diocese of Vermont, the local rectors and the bishop taking an active oversight, and girls came from all parts of the country, it being distinctively a church school. The building was erected for a dwelling and for many years was occupied by S. R. B. Wales, the grandfather of George R. Wales, the present president of the Bellows Falls Savings Institution. It dated back to about 1800, but was enlarged when it became a school.

The school was started a year or two previous to the coming of Miss Hapgood. In 1869 she took a lease of the property for 20 years from its owner, the late James H. Williams, who purchased it for the purpose, but the school attained no celebrity until it came under the care of Miss Hapgood. The name St. Agnes Hall

was given it by Rev. Charles S. Hale, then rector of Immanuel church. At the expiration of the lease it was relinquished, as the diocese had established a similar school, Bishop Hopkins Hall, in the vicinity of Burlington.

Miss Jane Hapgood was born on the ancestral farm in Reading, Vt., September 18, 1831; graduated from Troy Female Seminary, 1850; taught in South Carolina four years and in Illinois four years; and was vice-principal of Cleveland Seminary two years, previous to assuming charge of St. Agnes Hall. She died September 29, 1916, at the New Hampshire Memorial Hospital in Concord, N. H., where she had been an inmate for perhaps four years. Her age was 85 years and 11 days.

Among the young ladies in attendance at St. Agnes Hall in the winter of 1877-8 was a daughter of the late Hon. Joseph G. Cannon, who represented the 14th Illinois district in the U. S. Congress. Mrs. Cannon visited her daughter in January of that year and as a courtesy invited the entire school of about 40 girls to a sleigh ride. An immense sleigh large enough to accommodate the entire party, with four heavy horses, was provided by a local livery stable. As the outfit turned into School Street, in front of the school building, the entire load was overturned, causing a pretty general mix-up of pretty girls, none of whom were injured. After some time spent in righting and repairing the somewhat damaged sleigh the ride was continued, resulting in much pleasure, still remembered by a number of the participants, and also by one or two who happened to be on-lookers at the time.



The first high school in Bellows Falls was built in 1854, costing \$5,000. This was destroyed by fire 12 years later, and the second high school was built in 1866 at the cost of \$17,000. The third high school was built in 1885 at the cost of \$60,000 on the site of St. Agnes Hall. This, in turn, was destroyed by fire May 10, 1926, and replaced during the following two years by the present one, costing \$275,000.

IMMANUEL (EPISCOPAL) CHURCH, THE FIRST  
IN THE VILLAGE OF BELLOWS FALLS—  
DATES OF OTHER CHURCH BUILDINGS

The beautiful stone church building of Immanuel (Episcopal) church in this village had nearly \$10,000 expended upon it during the summer of 1928 in redecorating and in new fixtures and furniture, making it one of the most attractive church buildings in all this section of New England.

This church had the first organization and church building in Bellows Falls. The organization was effected in the village of Rockingham in 1798, that village then being the only one in this town. Their first services were held in the old town Meeting-House there until 1817, when, seeing the tendency of population toward the, then, new village of Bellows Falls, they decided to change their location. For ten years previous to the organization, or from about 1788, residents of all this section of New England, who were interested in the Church of England, had met for public worship at Rockingham, under the leadership of lay readers, availing themselves also of the ministrations of transient clergymen.

As early as 1785, the records of the town show a quaint certificate appointing Oliver Lovell, one of the town's earliest residents, as a "wardean of the Church of England for the Towns of Rockingham, Westminster, Chester, and Thomlinson (now Grafton) in Vermont State." It was dated at Claremont, N. H., and signed by "Ranne Cossett, Clerk."

In 1798, articles of association were drawn up by Dr. Samuel Cutler and signed by himself and Dr. Alexander Campbell and fifteen other influential citizens of the town. These articles were destroyed by fire in 1809. Dr. Cutler drafted them again, and the church was reformed in that year. The name of the original association was the "Protestant Episcopal Society of Rockingham," and it so remained until April 28, 1862, when it was changed to its present name of "Immanuel Church of Bellows Falls.

In 1817, upon removal from Rockingham to Bellows Falls, the parish erected its first church building, and it was the first church building in Bellows Falls. It was a frame structure and stood about thirty feet south of the present church building. It was surmounted by a square belfry of the peculiar architecture so common at that date, in the tower of which was, in June, 1819, hung the first village bell. The bell was presented to the village by Gen. Amasa Allen, a wealthy citizen of Walpole, N. H., and June 29, 1819, the members of the parish united with the citizens of Bellows Falls in tendering to Gen. Allen a notable banquet in recognition of the gift. It was held at "Webb's New Hotel," erected two years before on the present site of Hotel Windham. The bell is the one now used by the parish and was cast by Revere & Sons, of Boston, the senior member of which firm was the noted Paul Revere, immortalized by Longfellow. For over thirty years it was the only church bell in the village, and was used as a fire alarm, for curfew at nine in the evening, and to announce to the residents every death occurring within the village limits, according to the custom of those years. A certain num-

ber of strokes announced the sex (three strokes for a man and two strokes for a woman) followed by the number of strokes corresponding to the age of the deceased.

The first church building of the parish was, in 1867, replaced by the present beautiful stone structure, the building being occupied for the first time on Christmas day. In 1891, Schouler Memorial Parish House was presented to the parish by the late Mrs. James H. Williams (2d), in memory of her parents.

There is no record of a resident rector until 1810. The most notable incumbency in that office in the history of the church, in point of length of service, was that of Rev. Carlton Chase, D.D., who was later the bishop of New Hampshire. He served the parish from 1819 to 1844, and the second longest term was that of Rev. David L. Sanford who served from 1889 to 1908. The present rector, Rev. John G. Currier, came to the parish in December, 1919.

The second church building in Bellows Falls was the present Methodist building, erected in 1835. The Congregational church was erected in 1851. The first Catholic Mass was said in this village in 1848, while the railroads were being built, but they did not erect their present building until 1885. The present Baptist church building was built in 1860, and the last church building in the village, that of the Universalist society, was built in 1880 and 1881.

ST. CHARLES (CATHOLIC) CHURCH  
—FIRST MASS IN 1848

St. Charles (Catholic) Church of Bellows Falls is one of the strong and effective church organizations of the Connecticut Valley. It is building up a widespread influence for good in this and surrounding towns, having an interesting historic background.

As far as can be ascertained, the first mass ever said in Bellows Falls, or its vicinity, by any priest of the Catholic church, was during the year 1848. Until that year but few Catholics had come to this town, but the building of the different railroads at about that time brought a large number of Irish Catholics here.

From 1848 to 1853, Father Daley, a missionary of the Franciscan order, who was connected with the Boston diocese, visited this section once in three months, holding services in various dwellings of his communicants, and in a large building that stood near where the present office of the Vermont Farm Machine Company is. In a report made by Father Daley at about that time, the Bishop was informed that the number of Catholics in Rockingham, Windsor, Woodstock and Plymouth was about four hundred.

In September, 1850, Bishop Fitzpatrick of Boston, accompanied by Revs. George Fenwick and Samuel Mulledy, visited Bellows Falls, coming here from Rutland. No available hall seemed adapted to the wishes of the bishop, and, looking about the village, he was struck by the beauty of the large pine grove, then standing in the village just north of the present church edifice. He determined to hold his services there, and of this he

wrote: "On the hill at the west side of the village is an extensive pine grove. We find there a beautiful place for divine service. Two parallel lines of tall pine trees form a nave about a hundred feet long, covered by limbs which form an arch above. The ground is entirely free from undergrowth and perfectly dry. At the extremity of this natural nave a temporary sanctuary is formed of cotton cloth, enclosing three sides, and covering the top to keep off the wind. Four masses are celebrated in the forenoon." He also stated that people came from a radius of twenty-five miles and a great number confessed. Also, that the service was in both English and French, and that over a thousand people were present, only a few of whom he considered to be Protestants.

Bishop DeGoesbriand, of the diocese of Burlington, in 1853, celebrated mass in Island Hall, recently used as a boarding house known as the Fall Mountain House. In 1854, Fr. Druon came here regularly from Burlington, establishing his services in the old brick school house of the village, which stood at the corner of School and Cherry Streets, now the site of the residence of Judge Warner A. Graham, and he purchased the building in May of that year. It was remodeled and enlarged for church purposes, named St. Charles church, and served until the dedication of the present fine church building of the same name, on November 4, 1885.

The architect of the new building was George H. Guernsey, of Montpelier, and its cost, with the grounds, was \$28,000. The present parochial dwelling was first occupied in January of 1895, and cost \$14,500.

In 1894, a large and delightfully located tract of land was purchased for cemetery purposes on the south

side of "The Basin" about a mile south of the church, Vicar General Lynch, of Burlington, blessing it in September, 1898.

At this time St. Charles parish is much the largest one in town, comprising over three hundred families and over seventeen hundred members.

Father Druon, who came here in 1854, surrendered the parish the following year and it was then served by Rev. Charles O'Reilly, of Brattleboro, until 1869, when he was succeeded by Rev. Joseph Halpin, each having charge of both parishes. Rev. Edward Gendreau came to Bellows Falls, as the first resident pastor, in 1871. In 1882, Rev. Edward C. Reynolds came to assist Fr. Gendreau, and he succeeded to the pastorate in July, 1883. He served his parish longer than a minister of any church in the history of Bellows Falls. He was born in County Cavan, Ireland, in 1852; graduated from St. Bonaventure's College, Alleghany, N. Y., and Grand Seminary, at Montreal, where he was ordained just before coming to Bellows Falls. His whole priestly career was identified with Bellows Falls, and he exercised a strong influence for good over those to whom he ministered. He died February 19, 1919, and was succeeded by Rev. James D. Shannon, who conducted the parish until April 7, 1927, when he was transferred to Bennington. During Fr. Shannon's local administration the parish was freed from all indebtedness incurred by the acquisition and erection of the extensive parish buildings, and he left it with a handsome balance on hand. He was temporarily succeeded by Rev. Fr. John J. Cullion of West Rutland, Vt.

Rev. Thomas J. Henry, the present priest of the parish, came here in April, 1928, from West Rutland.

The parochial school was established in 1912, and it now numbers over 300 pupils. The public school building, known as the "Old High School" building, was purchased by them in 1913, and that year a most creditable convent building for the accommodation of the teachers was erected.



THE "ISLAND HOUSE," A POPULAR SUMMER  
HOTEL, 1850-1885

Until a comparatively recent time, people approaching Bellows Falls from the north or the south observed as a prominent feature of the landscape a stately building on the highest point of the island, a large brick building with high white pillars, which had, since its erection in 1849, been a prominent feature of the business life of Bellows Falls. It was the "Island House" building which from 1849 until about 1868 was one of the most popular hotels of the Connecticut valley, patronized before the Civil War by an extremely wealthy class of people from the South, on their way to and from the White Mountains, and as a summer hotel. It was the scene of many social triumphs and the home of both beauty and greatness.

Until the first named year it had been the site of one of the best dwellings of the village, built about 1792 by Dr. Samuel Cutler, occupied by him, and later by his son-in-law, Rector Carlton Chase, who was later Episcopal Bishop of New Hampshire. In 1849-50 Col. Roswell Shurtleff remodeled the old dwelling for a hotel and it was destroyed by fire before being opened. The Colonel then erected the present four-story brick structure, as the railroads were then just being built into the village from four different directions. For years it was a noted success, drawing a high grade of patronage from wide areas. The Civil War caused a loss of that class of patronage.

Early in its history much money was expended on its surroundings and in providing excursions and entertainment for its guests. Col. Shurtleff owned nearly

all the land on the island. He had two bowling alleys near where the present office of the Vermont Machine Co. is, and the frame building across the street, recently occupied as the Fall Mountain House (now vacant), was erected for an entertainment hall that saw many scenes of gaiety and festivity. For some years it was the largest and best public hall in the village. The stables and extensive gardens and greenhouses were in the rear of the hotel building, on land now covered by the works of the Robertson Paper Co. and the Co-operative Creamery, while across Bridge Street in front and on the two sides were parks with fountains and statuary. A beautiful grove of pines extended over the whole length of the rocky river bank opposite the falls.

A good carriage road was built to the summit of Mount Kilburn and a sightly picnic and observation house built on Table Rock could be seen for many miles up and down the Connecticut, with its Grecian architecture and its white pillars. All during the summer season, carriages took guests twice each day to the top of the mountain, and also to the noted Abenauqui mineral spring two miles south on the New Hampshire side of the river.

The decline of the summer business late in the '60s and in the '70s led to a gradual sale of the property surrounding the house on the island. Manufactories crept in, the branch railroad to the mills was built along the river bank, destroying its picturesqueness, and the managers lost money each year. As a result, it was closed as a hotel in the fall of 1887, and the main part of the building has been for several years a part of the buildings of

the Vermont Farm Machine Co., occupied largely for storage.

This hotel was at different times the abiding place of a number of eminent people. President Ulysses S. Grant was a guest, and spoke to a large concourse of people from the balcony over the south door, on August 7, 1869. The veteran General, W. T. Sherman, spoke from the same balcony July 23, 1869. On October 3, 1853, the Ancient and Honorable Artillery of Boston had a noted banquet within its walls, and of the fragments that remained of the feast on the next day there were picked up six hundred and fifty bottles, the contents of which had contributed to the conviviality of the occasion. The bill of fare for that occasion, of which there is still one at least in existence, is one of the most extensive, and beautifully printed, of any similar occasion of its kind known to have been held here.

### MORGAN'S TAVERN—OLDEST BUILDING IN BELLOWS FALLS—MORGAN FAMILY

The old building at the northwest corner of the Square, the first building going north on the west side of Rockingham Street, is the oldest building of any kind now standing in Bellows Falls village. It is adjacent to the Central House building and on a part of the same lot. It was known for many years subsequent to 1798 as "Morgan's Tavern." Quartus Morgan, who became its proprietor that year, often remarked that "it was a very old building when I bought it."

Mr. Morgan came to Bellows Falls in the spring of 1798 from West Springfield, Mass., making the journey with his wife on horseback. Their household goods came up the river by the flat boat which then plied between here and Hartford, Conn. He had already purchased, through the influence of his brother-in-law, Leverett Tuttle, who was a part owner of the line of Connecticut river boats, this property which had been used several years as a tavern. This village was at that time having its first boom, for work had been actively prosecuted several years on the building of the canal, which has in all the years since then been such an active factor in the business of the place. The canal was begun in 1792 and the first boats passed through it in August of 1802, ten years later. All accounts indicate that this old hotel, or tavern, was a large factor then, and for many years thereafter, in the business and social life of the small village.

After the navigation of the river began, this old building was one of the most important stopping places, for all kinds of refreshments, of any tavern for many miles north and south. Mr. and Mrs. Morgan continued it as a tavern until 1814, when, Mr. Morgan having died in 1810, and Mrs. Morgan having erected the dwelling on her farm just north of the village, now occupied by the family of William De St. Croix, she sold the tavern property. It is not known how long it was continued as a tavern, but probably until after the first hotel building had been erected on the present site of Hotel Windham in 1816. Since then the occupancy has been a varied one, mostly for tenements above and mercantile purposes on the ground floor.

In January of 1923 the local organization of Odd Fellows received a deed of it, together with the stables in the rear, with the expectation of sometime erecting a building to be occupied partially by them for fraternal purposes. Quartus Morgan was appointed postmaster of Bellows Falls in 1804 and continued in that office until his death in 1810. The office was located during these years in this building. His original appointment papers in 1804 and again in 1809, together with much correspondence in relation thereto with the department at Washington, are treasured in the town clerk's office. Among the letters are several written by hand, evidently with a quill pen, by the postmaster general himself, when the business of his department was not quite as voluminous as now. Also in the collection are a number of county licenses to Mr. Morgan as an "Inn Keeper" of that olden time.

Jabez Hills, probably the most eccentric citizen in the history of Bellows Falls, succeeded Mr. Morgan as postmaster in 1810 and the office was that year moved to the Hall & Green general store on the east side of the Square. Mr. Hills retained the office twenty years, or until 1830.

## “TURKEY-SHOOTS” A POPULAR DIVERSION OF A CENTURY AGO—HOTELS BENEFITED

As the Thanksgiving season approached in early years, the practice of having “turkey shoots,” and shooting at a mark for other prizes, was indulged in by the citizens of practically all the villages in this section of New England, and was the source of much fun and entertainment. Only a few of the present older residents remember the thrills that came with the practice, which resulted in there being a much greater proportion of excellent marksmen than at the present time.

Turkeys and other game were set up on benches at a fairly long distance and shot at by contestants until blood was drawn, the bird then becoming the property of the lucky marksman, who had previously paid a varying price per shot, depending upon the length of the range. In a similar way all kinds of property were disposed of, the shooting being at a mark.

The proprietors of hotels were usually those in charge of the shooting, as it would largely benefit their bar, the crowd attending such “shoots” usually being a thirsty one. The early Bellows Falls newspapers abound in frequent advertisements regarding these. Among the landlords of this vicinity most frequently advertising such sports was John Robertson of “Robertson’s tavern,” which stood where Hotel Windham now does in this village, Peter Evans and John Pierce of Charlestown, John R. Gibson and Amos Hitchcock of Rockingham.

The following advertisement in the Bellows Falls Intelligencer of January 14, 1822, is a sample of many

others which varied according to circumstances, and the class of property to be disposed of. These, in those days, took the place of the present practice of "selling by ticket."

#### “TO SPORTSMEN

“The subscriber, on the 24th inst. at 9 o'clock A. M., will set up a target to be shot at, distance 30 rods, tickets one dollar each, not exceeding 54. The prize will be an OX weighing eleven cwt., well fatted. The marksman who comes the nearest the center of the target to draw the prize. Likewise a large fat cow will be set up if the tickets can be sold.

“Tickets to be had at the bar of said Robertson's hotel.

JOHN ROBERTSON.”



## BAPTISMS IN THE BELLOWS FALLS CANAL

From the time of the organization of the first Baptist church in Bellows Falls in 1856, until the year 1871, this church observed the ordinance of baptism in the Bellows Falls canal at a point near where the Claremont Paper Company's mill now stands. The present changes being made at that point by the new hydraulic development remind a number of the older residents of the observance of the rite there in those early years. The canal at that time flowed wide open, and formed a large pond at that point, in which at times logs were stored to be cut up by the two saw mills and other manufactories of those days. Large audiences gathered on the bank back of the Fenton and Howard stores to watch the immersions, the ordinance often being observed in the winter time when it was necessary to cut holes in the ice for the purpose. In 1871 changes were made in the canal and at that place it was covered over. Then the church had a baptistry placed in its house of worship, and the use of the canal for that purpose was discontinued.

## BARN RAISING WITH (AND WITHOUT) RUM— A NOTABLE INCIDENT IN ATHENS

Until comparatively recently there has been for many years a large and well-executed sign in a prominent position on the front of a barn in the town of Athens, about ten miles from Bellows Falls, reading, "Anti-Rum and Tobacco." The original owner of the farm, Thomas Wyman, came there early in the last century when the locality was a wilderness. He cleared the land and resided there many years. The barn sign was a reminder of the fact that it was the first barn in this locality for many miles around that was "raised" without the assistance of the traditional supply of rum, always expected to be served on such occasions. Mr. Wyman was always one of the most ardent advocates of temperance to be found, and his influence in this respect was greatly felt. When this barn had been framed, and the bents were ready to be raised, he determined to break the previously universal practice of furnishing liquors, a supposed necessity upon such occasions. Plenty of good food had been provided and the neighbors had gathered from miles around, but when the time came they refused to lift the frame without the rum. The owner would not sacrifice his principles, and the raising was postponed after much talk uncomplimentary to the host. A few days later more than a sufficient number of temperance men, who honored the integrity of Mr. Wyman, were on hand to assist, and the barn went up. He placed the attractive and unique sign on his barn, and for several decades it was a reminder to the passers-by of a strong minded and good man, whose example had an important effect toward temperance in all this locality.

INCIDENTS OF THE RAISING OF THE OLD  
ROCKINGHAM MEETING HOUSE—GEN. JOHN  
FULLER BUILDER

Among the incidents connected with the erection of the old Rockingham Meeting House in 1787, the building which has many years been treasured by the inhabitants of the town and is still the Mecca for tourists and sight-seers, the circumstances connected with the raising of the frame on June 9th, 1787, are of particularly interesting historical interest. No definite record of the circumstances was made at the time, as far as found, but several old letters have been unearthed which throw light upon it. One written in 1884 by the Rev. Horace Allbee, who was born in this town in 1797 and returned as an old man to spend his last days on his old home farm on the meadows near the Williams river, sets the date. He wrote as follows:—

“Mrs. Ezekiel Weston was the daughter of David Haselton, who was born in 1791. Mrs. Weston says that she distinctly remembers that her grandmother, Jane Haselton, wife of Richard Haselton, related to her that her eldest child, Uriel (Mrs. Weston’s uncle), was born on the 6th day of June, 1787, and that on the 9th day of June of the same year, before departing for the raising of the meeting house, her husband, Richard, came into the house and bade her and their baby, who was then only three days old, good-bye, expecting, or fearing, at least, that he might be killed at the raising, but, on the contrary, returned in safety to his family after the house was raised. And further, my brother, E. W. Allbee, says he distinctly remembers hearing our father, Ebenezer Allbee, who was born on the 17th of April, 1768, say that he was at the raising, being then 19 years

of age, and that it was in June, 1787, but he does not recollect the day of the month. The statement of Mrs. Weston fixes the precise date as June 9, 1787, of which there can be no doubt.”

Mr. Allbee often told friends and relatives that his father, Ebenezer Allbee, who was at the raising, told him that on the day of the raising of the meeting house a washtub full of toddy, made of rum and loaf sugar, was prepared and notice was given the men to come down from the frame and help themselves with the tin dippers.

An aged man living in Greenfield, Mass., in 1887, in a letter to A. N. Swain of the Bellows Falls Times about the old meeting house building, says:—

“It was my good fortune to have met General Fuller several times during the summer of 1816, who was the master builder of this old house. I was told at that time that when all was ready Mr. Fuller quietly took his place on the beam and went up with the front broadside, as was customary in those days. At the time I saw him he lived in the Dr. Campbell house, so called, now owned and occupied by Rodney Wiley. I think it must have required three or four extra men to carry Mr. Fuller up, for at the time I saw him he was good for at least 250 pounds.”

General Fuller was one of the foremost residents of the town in his early days. He lived then on a farm about a mile north of Rockingham village, on top of the hill a short distance south of what were the Proctor and Wiley farms.. A letter written by an old man living in Nashua, N. H., July 7, 1884, gives the following additional details of the “raising”:—

“I can remember any event told me 70 years ago easier than incidents that took place five years ago. The year that I was 16 years old my father died in Rockingham and I was obliged to work out from home. I went to work for old General Fuller. He lived one mile from the middle of the town and was the man who built the meeting house. He gave me a full account of the time they had at this raising. After he got everything ready the old General took a bottle of rum in one hand, a tumbler in the other and stood on the plate of the bent on the south side, then he gave the order to put it up in that position. He rode up on the plate, and he was a man weighing 200 pounds. When they had got it up he stood on the plate, drank his health to the crowd below, then threw his bottle and tumbler down and called for the ladder, coming down amid long and loud cheering.”

Without doubt serious accidents occurred at times at those “raisings” of olden times, as feared by Richard Haselton, and described below. At the raising of the present church building in the village of Langdon, N. H., in June of 1842, a portion of the heavy frame fell killing one man and seriously injuring 15 or 20 others. The Rockingham meeting house is 56 feet long and 44 feet wide. It is built of heavy old growth pine timber, portions of the frame and roof being 14 by 16 inches square, which must have required the combined efforts of a large force of men to raise in sections, or “bents.”

During the first years of the history of the old Rockingham town meeting house, its front door was used to post notices of all important meetings and for the general dissemination of knowledge among citizens of the town. One of its more important uses was the posting of all matrimonial bans, or intentions of marriage, such

as were required in those years to be proclaimed in church, or other place prescribed by law, that any person might object to their taking place.

March 15, 1804, Rev. Samuel Whiting posted the following unique, but expressive, notice upon the door:—

“Notice—John Parks Finney and Lydia Archer, of Rockingham, came to my house, and having been published agreeably to law, but he being a minor and not having his father’s consent, I refused to marry them. They, however, declared that they took and considered each other as husband and wife, meaning to live and do for each other accordingly.

“SAMUEL WHITING,  
“Minister.”

This may be considered as the first free love marriage that ever took place in this county. In the year 1800 the census showed the number of inhabitants in the town to be 1,634, while the number of school children enrolled in the 16 districts of the town in 1805 was 736.

LANGDON, N. H.—ACCIDENT AT CHURCH RAISING—TRADITION OF LARGE ELM TREE

Our neighboring town of Langdon, N. H., so named in honor of a former governor, although not having a large citizenship, has a fund of history and tradition which make interesting reading. Among the notable incidents there were those connected with the raising, on or about June 1st, 1842, of the Congregational church, which is still in use there.

The "raising" of the frame of any building in olden times was always an event of importance, calling for the gathering of a large number of men to assist. The style of construction was then entirely different from present methods. Buildings were always "framed" while lying upon the ground, and with very heavy timbers. Each of the four sides constituted a "bent" in early parlance. These were put together firmly by themselves, lying on the ground in proper position, so when they were "raised" they made the four sides of the building, and the sides were firmly secured together with wooden pins at the corners.

An unusually large gathering of strong men had come to the raising of this church building on that day, called together by interest in the building because of its expected use, and by the hope of partaking in the usual "refreshments" always served in those days, for churches as well as any other building. The main part of the building had been raised and pinned in its proper position and a portion of the belfry was being added, when some of the timbers gave way and precipitated 15 or 20 men to the ground with the falling timbers.

One man, Jonas Blood, was killed in the fall and about a dozen others were severely injured, one with a broken leg, another with broken ribs, and others more or less seriously hurt.

Early in the year 1878 a giant elm was cut down which had stood on the farm of Mr. Charles Holden in Langdon. It was a notable one and had been one of the old landmarks in that part of the state for over a hundred years. Its height was 100 feet; its girth two feet from the ground was seventeen feet; thirty-four feet from the ground twelve feet; forty-eight feet up to the first limb. At sixty feet from the ground six limbs branched out, each measuring six feet in circumference. A section of the trunk twelve feet long was estimated to weigh eight tons, and required nine yoke of oxen to draw it. The whole tree contained sixteen cords of wood.

There was an old legend connected with this noble tree which tradition had carefully preserved, and which had been believed in, and handed down from father to son for the previous 125 years. It was as follows:—

During the old French and Indian war, a detachment of soldiers was sent out from Boston to join their regiment, which had a few days before started for Quebec. The detachment consisted of fourteen men and all expected, with long and rapid marches, to overtake the regiment in a short time.

On the third day one of their number fell sick, and was left in the hands of friendly Indians, in the town of Langdon. In a short time he recovered, but again fell, this time in love with a beautiful Indian squaw, who was soon to become the wife of an Indian brave. The warrior grew jealous, and watched his chance. One



evening while the young soldier and beautiful Indian girl sat under this noble elm, gazing at the moon, and talking of love, an arrow swift and unerring from the bow of the Indian lover, smites the white man through the heart, and pins him to the tree. The maiden with her own hand draws out the arrow, digs the grave, and with her own hands lays her white lover in it, covering him with her own beautiful skirts of fur, which she takes from her person, and with her own hands heaps the cold earth upon him who had taken her young heart captive. She never left that noble tree, never again tasted food, and on the seventh day was found dead upon the grave of her lover.

### THREE BELLOWS FALLS RESIDENTS BECAME GENERALS IN THE CIVIL WAR

When the Civil War broke out there were three young men living in Bellows Falls who became during its progress prominent in military circles, and each retired holding commissions as generals. Lewis Addison Grant became a major general, and both Edwin Henry Stoughton and his brother, Charles Bradley Stoughton, became brigadier generals, each giving conspicuous service to the government.

Major General Lewis Addison Grant had lived here since 1857, practicing law in company with Hon. H. E. Stoughton, the firm name being Stoughton & Grant. He was born in Winhall, Vt., a son of James Grant, a native of Wrentham, Mass., and Elizabeth Wyman of Peru, Vt. His education was in the common school and before the open fire place of the Winhall home in the long winter evenings; at Leland & Gray Seminary at Townshend, and at Chester, Vt., Academy. He taught school several years in neighboring towns, and in Washington, N. J., Harvard, Mass., and in Boston. While teaching he began the study of law with Mr. Stoughton, then in Chester, Vt., and was admitted to the bar in Windsor county in 1855, and the supreme court of the state in 1857.

At the outbreak of the war he entered the volunteer service, his first commission being that of major in the 5th Vermont regiment, Aug. 15th, 1861. He organized the regiment which was mustered into the U. S. service at St. Albans, Vt., Sept. 16, 1861. He was rapidly promoted, his commission as lieutenant colonel

bearing date of Sept. 25th, 1861; colonel of the same regiment Sept. 16, 1862; in February, 1862, he was given the command of the "Old Vermont Brigade," and with this most noted organization he made a record which was equalled by few brigades of the army. He continued in command of this brigade, and of the division to which it belonged, during the remainder of the war, being brevetted as a major general on October 19th, 1864, the date of the battle of Cedar Creek where he commanded the division that checked and held the rebel advance and saved the day.

The "Old Brigade" was in 30 battles, in all of which he was in command except two. He was wounded twice, at the battle of Fredericksburg and again at the battle of Petersburg. He was honorably discharged August 24th, 1865, and returned to Bellows Falls for a time, later removing to Chicago and becoming interested in various improvement and investment companies in the West. He was appointed assistant secretary of war in 1890 under President Harrison's administration, serving also during a portion of President Cleveland's term. During 1888 and 1889 he traveled extensively in this country and abroad.

The last years of the general's life were spent in Minneapolis, where he was for several years president and manager of an investment company. He died there March 20, 1918, in his 90th year. He left a daughter, S. Augusta, who married George W. Stone of Minneapolis, and two sons, Ulysses Sherman, a prominent professor of geology in the North Western University at Evanston, Ill., and James Colfax, a practicing attorney of Minneapolis. The General was twice married, 1st to

S. Augusta Hartwell of Harvard, Mass., and 2nd, to M. Helen Pierce, of Hartland, Vt. The latter died March 20th, 1927, in Minneapolis at the age of 80 years. During his later years he made a visit to Vermont and the legislature being in session he was entertained in a remarkable manner by the state and its government officials.

Of the three Bellows Falls citizens who became generals in the Civil War, Lewis A. Grant,, Edwin H. Stoughton and Charles Bradley Stoughton, the last two were sons of the Hon. H. E. Stoughton, one of the leading lawyers of Vermont in his day. Their home was what has in later years been known as the Hetty Green place near the intersection of Westminster and Church Streets. The father was an ardent "Union" Democrat, always outspoken in favor of sustaining the Union, in striking contrast to the large number of Democrats who opposed the prosecution of the war. He was a cripple from seven years and studied law on a cobbler's bench. The family came here from Chester, Vt., in 1853.

The son, Edwin H., was born in Chester in 1838, entered West Point Military Academy in 1854 and graduated in 1859. He was appointed then a lieutenant in the 6th Infantry of the regular army, located at various military posts in the West, serving there until the war broke out. He then returned to Bellows Falls, after having resigned his position in the regular army, and organized and drilled the 4th Vermont Regiment. He was appointed its colonel and his record, as well as that of his regiment, was a brilliant one, taking part in numerous engagements, and they were often commended in general orders.

He was promoted to brigadier-general of volunteers in 1862, and assigned to the command of the 2nd Vermont Brigade. In March of 1863 the Rebel Captain, John S. Mosby, with a party of 29 men, raided his headquarters in the village of Fairfax Court House, Va., access to the village being gained through a gap in the picket line. The capture occasioned much criticism in military circles, it being at first reported that his headquarters were established outside the Union lines, and that he was rash in thus establishing his position. General Stoughton's mother and two sisters were with him in the village, in a house a short distance away, and they were not disturbed. They had spent the previous evening with him in his room, not leaving until a late hour. The general had retired immediately, and Col. Mosby awakened him by entering his room about 3 A. M., having captured Lieut. Prentiss, the guard, who opened the door when Mosby knocked.

With the general were captured about 25 men and 55 horses. He was taken to Richmond where he was accorded all the courtesies and privileges that could be allowed a prisoner by his old class-mate at West Point, Gen. Fitz Hugh Lee. He was confined in Libby prison, from which he was exchanged May 7th, 1863, but he never returned to the army. He studied law with his father in Bellows Falls and was admitted to the Windham County bar in 1864. He later removed to New York city, where he practiced law with his uncle Hon. E. W. Stoughton. He never fully recovered from the effects of his confinement in Libby prison and died of consumption on Christmas Day of 1868. His remains are buried in the family lot in Immanuel Cemetery in

this village. He was a popular officer with his men and when the Grand Army Post was organized in Bellows Falls it was named "E. H. Stoughton Post" in honor of a brave officer, which name it has always borne. The general never married.

In 1906 in a personal letter to the writer from General Mosby, who was then employed by the government in Washington, he wrote that "great injustice has been done him (Stoughton). He was entirely blameless. If anyone was to blame it was Wyndham, who commanded the cavalry outposts and let me slip in." Gen. Mosby also wrote a facetious account of his finding Gen. Stoughton so sound asleep that he turned down the bed clothes and awakened him with a smart slap.

General Charles Bradley Stoughton, a brother of Edwin H., and the third officer to be raised to the rank of general credited to Bellows Falls, was also born in Chester and came to Bellows Falls with his parents in 1853 at the age of 12 years. He attended the local schools, fitting for college here and graduated from the University of Vermont in 1861. He was active in drilling troops for the Civil War and was commissioned as adjutant of the 4th Vermont Regiment in August of that year, his brother being colonel of the same organization. He was made a lieutenant colonel in July of 1862, colonel in November of the same year when only 21 years of age, one of the youngest officers in the service. He was often referred to by his superior officers as "especially distinguished on the field of battle." By a wound received at Funkstown, Md., July 10, 1863, he lost the use of his right eye. He was honorably discharged in

1864, and brevetted a brigadier-general in 1865 for "gallantry on the field."

After the war, with his brother, Edwin H., he studied law in the office of his father in Bellows Falls, and later practiced in New York with his uncle, Hon. E. W. Stoughton. He died January 17, 1898, and is buried in the family lot in Immanuel church cemetery here. He married Ada Ripley, daughter of Robert C. Hooper of Boston. They had six children.

INCIDENTS OF BELLOWS FALLS AND VICINITY  
DURING THE WAR OF THE REBELLION

During the days immediately preceding the Civil War, and while it was in progress, many most interesting incidents occurred in Bellows Falls and vicinity of which only a few of the older residents have recollection.

There had been for several years previous to the war an active and somewhat noted company of militia here, known as "The Green Mountain Guards" having the state designation of "Company E," 12th Vermont Regiment, which happens to be the same letter by which the local company is designated today. The Green Mountain Guards went to the state muster on Langdon Meadow near Montpelier in the summer of 1860. It was a brigade muster and under command of General Alonzo Jackman, the well known head of Vermont University. The local armory of Company E was the second story of a large building near the head of the canal, the first story of which was then used for storage of wool. In 1861 nearly the entire company went to the war, a thrilling incident being the forming of the company in line and after an address by the captain the order was given that any who were not willing to enlist should "step two paces to the rear." Only three or four of the entire company stepped back.

During the war 243 men were credited to this town, of whom 5 were killed in action, 7 died of wounds, 9 died of disease, and 3 died in Confederate prisons. Twenty-eight were wounded in battle, 12 taken prisoners, 3 men were drafted and 25 furnished substitutes.



A. N. Swain was editor of the Bellows Falls Times, a strong Union newspaper, and Hiram Atkins was editor of the Bellows Falls Argus, noted as a strong anti-war or "Copperhead" paper. The files of these two papers of those years show interesting incidents, and many strong expressions used on both sides. At one time the two men met in the post office and getting into a heated argument it resulted in blows and a lively scrimmage, long remembered by those present at the time.

During the Lincoln campaign for the presidency a party flag with his name on it was cut down one night from its pole on the lawn in front of the Baptist church. This caused intense excitement for weeks, a sizable reward being offered for the "miscreant." For years no knowledge was had as to the real facts. In 1906 a man named Lucius B. Wright, then of Everett, Mass., wrote of his participancy in the episode. He told of a party of young fellows, of good Union families, who had been over to Drewsville to a dance that night and returning, seeing the flag, one dared another to cut it down, which was done, and the boys, hearing "Otis Arms and Mr. Beard, the miller, coming," ran to the pine hill back of Immanuel Church and each climbed pine trees, from which they listened to the excitement of the crowd that had gathered. Getting to their respective homes, later, the village tailor, "Cal" Newcomb, had several hard jobs in cleaning the pitch off the trousers the next day. Each participant kept his own counsel, and this was the first exposé made of the real facts.

The first troops passing through Bellows Falls for the seat of war were from Claremont, April 29, 1861, followed three days later by a company from Bradford,

Vt., of which Roswell Farnham, later the governor, was the captain.

Two residents who went into the army from here each lost a leg by the same cannon ball; one was the right leg and the other the left. Both returned here and lived many years, being well known citizens. They were Daniel Higgins, grandfather of Charles D. Higgins of the present paper mill firm of Blake & Higgins, and Henry W. Corlew, for many years a harness maker at Saxtons River village.

For several years during the war, particularly following the noted raid of Fenians on the city of St. Albans on October 19th, 1864, many fears were entertained in the Connecticut river valley of trouble from similar causes. While the fears were not so marked as in towns nearer the Canadian border apprehensions were felt in Bellows Falls and many false alarms occurred. For some time an organized body of local men, numbering seventy, guarded the streets here by night in squads of seven men each. They had a headquarters in the north store of what was at that time called Farr's block between Rockingham and Canal Streets, using it as an arsenal also, and for some months there were one thousand Belgian muskets stored there. The day and night trains were all carefully watched, and they carried frequent detachments of soldiers from the south going to guard the frontier.

Several years ago one of the few survivors of that Bellows Falls guard told a number of amusing experiences of the time and among other incidents he told of the only arrest made by them. It was the arrest of a lunatic being carried on the night train to the Brattle-

boro asylum. He ran from the train when it stopped here, jumped into the canal and disappeared. Some hours later he was discovered by the patrol clinging to some bushes under a stump that was in the canal about opposite what was then known as the old organ factory, which had for many years been operated by William Nutting, just above Bridge Street. Many laughable errors were told of apprehending belated business men of the village, and many frights were occasioned by rumors of the coming of the enemy.

For many years previous to the war the citizens of Bellows Falls had owned a cannon of some size which had done duty in Fourth of July celebrations, and in celebrating other important events. During the war it was often used to express the joy of the people over any important Union victory. It was last used in celebrating the Gettysburg victory, and the next day its whereabouts became a mystery. It was not found until August 28th, 1868, when workmen employed in dredging the canal brought it to the surface from the bottom. It was always generally understood that some of the sympathizers with the Southern cause threw it into the canal during the night following the victory.

The town of Rockingham expended \$81,480.72 in support of the war, all soldiers' families being well cared for. The town had 54 men whose income at that time was large enough so they had to pay a "Special Income Tax" levied by the government. The largest payer on the list was Wyman Flint, later many years a paper mill owner here. Henry S. Blake, later a well known locomotive engineer between here and Springfield, Mass., was the first man to enlist in town. "Jack" Russell was the first man from here to be killed in battle.

## A LOCAL CIVIL WAR INCIDENT—"HURRAH FOR MOTHER WITH THE RASPBERRY PIE"

On Monday, the 24th day of September, 1861, the 5th Vermont regiment broke camp at St. Albans and passed through Bellows Falls on its way to Brattleboro, and from thence to Washington, there to join the 2d and 3d regiments which were in camp at Chain Bridge. They were a fine body of men, stout, hard and gentlemanly. Bellows Falls had more than an ordinary interest in this regiment for it gave one of its best citizens and most prominent lawyers for one of its leading officers. Maj.-Gen. Lewis A. Grant was its first major.

On arriving in Bellows Falls at about 6 in the evening, an incident occurred long remembered by many of the large crowd which had gathered to greet the soldiers. For many years it was referred to and discussed by several who were on the platform and witnessed it. The soldiers were given a lunch at the depot by local people, the train stopping for the purpose 20 minutes.

While the ladies were distributing the food, an elderly woman very plainly and unfashionably dressed, with a thin face and whitening hair, quietly elbowed her way through the crowd with a huge basket hung on her arm. The car windows and platforms were filled with soldiers, and one sang out, "What ye got in your basket, mother?" With an expression of satisfaction on her worn face, which a bystander described over 30 years ago to the writer, saying he "remembered it as if it was but yesterday," she, without speaking, handed him a raspberry pie. One taste was a signal for more calls, and she passed up and down the platform till the im-

mense basket was emptied and still the call came from the boys, "Hand up another pie, mother," and as the train moved on, hands and caps went up with "Hurrah for the mother with the raspberry pie," and "God bless you, mother."

She turned away with a smile and a tear, her face beaming with happiness no words can express, as though no benediction would ever be half so holy. The bystander who rehearsed the story 30 years later added, "I often wonder who she might be; was she a mother? Had she a boy gone out before, waiting in camp for McClellan to move on, or early sleeping near the Potomac? Or was she already made childless or a widow by the war? She was a stranger and in the humbler walks of life; her deed was not a great one, but her patriotism is immortal. She has doubtless long since gone on her long journey, from which there is no return, but 'the cup of cold water' has its reward." Certain it is that these memories of home, and such incidents in the Green Mountain State, added to the quiet courage, bravery and energy of our boys in blue and made the Old Vermont brigade the one notably recognized by the brave and lamented Gen. John Sedgwick in the Wilderness, when he said, "Keep the column closed up and put the Vermonters ahead."

#### FOURTH OF JULY PRANKS IN EARLY TIMES NEAR BELLOWS FALLS

If records and traditions are correct, the "Young America" of the present generation, in all this vicinity, is not up to that of a century or so ago in its shrewdness and real humor in the annual celebrations of the Fourth of July. It used to be an ingenious practice in this section of the Connecticut river valley to steal the few cannon then in use, and held as public property by the different villages, for such celebrations, if they could not be borrowed. Sometimes, in addition to its being a contest of wits between different villages in Vermont, the strife was extended across the river to rivalry between the different villages of the two states, thus materially increasing the interest in the result of victory. The strife was not confined to the boys but was a part of the annual fun of more mature ages.

One year, while the village of Rockingham was the most populous one in this township, the celebration of the year before had left the possession of the town cannon with them, and the Bellows Falls men wanted it. They were denied it, and it was a great mystery where it was stored. These two villages were each anxious for the field piece, that it might be first heard on the morning of Independence Day from their locality, and this would be considered as a much prized victory. Bellows Falls heard the report that the much wanted piece of artillery was under a certain pile of lumber in the tannery yard of Manessah Divoll, where citizens of Rockingham village had hidden it. A large party was made up and after dark, the night of the 3rd, marched up the four

miles to capture it. They took along a team to bring it back, but the whole village was hunted over without finding it. Captain Walter Taylor, who was always prominent in such pranks, told the boys all to hide and he would see if he could find it by strategy. He aroused Samuel L. Billings, then town clerk, who, he thought, would know where it was hidden. He came to his door very sleepily and was told by the Captain that he understood that the Saxtons River boys had taken their cannon. His sleepiness disappeared quickly as he said, "Hold on a minute and I will get my lantern and see."

They went down to the tannery and, finding a shovel, scraped off the dirt from two movable planks of the floor, and raising them were gratified to find the field-picce, nestling where it had been hidden. He remarked he "was glad it was there," which sentiment was echoed by the Captain, and after the town clerk had retired the much coveted prize was loaded into the wagon and taken to Bellows Falls, where it was the "first gun" of the next day's celebration.

The same year the Westminster boys stole the cannon from Walpole, but, as soon as its voice was heard and the New Hampshire boys knew where it was, they rallied in so large numbers as to be able to take it by force. The rally force was under command of old Captain Sparhawk, a prominent resident of Walpole in his day. Such incidents occurred each year, and there was considerable rivalry to see which locality would use the most cunning or force, and secure the use of guns, which were limited in number in all this locality. No Fourth of July celebration was considered complete without a

goodly-sized cannon to make such noise as is now seldom heard.

One Fourth of July some of the boys were celebrating at a very early hour in the morning, having a good-sized cannon which they were causing to "talk" in front of Mammoth block on the south side of the Square in Bellows Falls, in front of the present clothing store of J. J. Fenton & Co. The patrons of the "Bellows Falls Stage House," across the Square, being unable to sleep, were many of them sauntering about the house. A guest of the house, who had been lying on an old-fashioned hair-cloth sofa in the "sitting-room," on the south side, had just risen and sauntered out to the piazza. He stood leaning against the second pillar from the east when the boys, in their excitement, forgetting to remove the iron ramrod from the cannon, fired it toward the hotel. The ramrod passed between the post and the guest, through the side of the building into the sitting room, lengthwise through the lounge from which the guest had just arisen, and buried itself in the opposite wall of the room without doing further damage.



LAUGHABLE TRANSPOSITION OF SIGNS—  
A GOAT AT IMMANUEL CHURCH SERVICES

It is a well-known fact, often commented upon by the older citizens, that the traditions of the humorous happenings of a century or more ago are longer remembered and more often rehearsed than some of later years. This is particularly true of this town and the writer has treasured several told him many years ago, actual occurrences of this locality. It often seems that the present generation is lacking in the keen sense of humor that was so often perpetuated by word of mouth a century ago.

On October 31, 1833, during the navigation era of the Connecticut river, a rule was adopted by the Bellows Falls Canal Company requiring that all boats entering the canal at either the upper or lower end should do so stern foremost. Notices of this were posted near each entrance to the canal and other public places in Bellows Falls.

One of these signs with large letters, "All Enter Stern Foremost," stood many years at the head of the canal. One Friday night some of the practical jokers, for whom the town was noted, removed the sign and nailed it up over the door of a tenement house on Westminster Street occupied by two maiden ladies. The public efforts of these worthy women Saturday morning to remove it by pulling it down with spike poles were ludicrous. Worshipers at Immanuel (Episcopal) church the next morning smiled broadly as they approached the church and discovered the sign nailed high over the door of that edifice. Men who in after years were among

the most sedate and sober of our citizens often admitted with a sly wink that they were responsible for the transposition.

Col. Roswell Shurtleff built the Island House, which from 1849 to the Civil War era was one of the most noted hotels of the entire Connecticut valley. In the early fifties he kept two or three goats, which used to stray about the village. One warm Sunday evening while vesper services were in progress at Immanuel church one of these strayed in at the open door and stalked solemnly up the right-hand aisle of the old church until at the head of the aisle it stood and faced the rector as he proceeded with the service. Capt. Henry F. Green, then one of the most prominent of the local citizens, who occupied the front pew on that side, warned by the tittering of the younger worshipers that heroic measures must be adopted in order to save a serious disturbance, suddenly swung wide open the high pew door used at that date and administered to the intruder a most vigorous kick. The goat turned and scampered back the length of the church aisle and out of the open door, the clatter of his hoofs upon the carpet, and later the uncovered floor of the vestibule, beating a tattoo which for many years rang in the halls of memory of those who heard it, and the leap from the steps is said never to have been excelled by that of any goat upon record.

CAPTAIN CHARLES CHURCH—USED LIQUORS  
FREELY—INCIDENT OF A RAFTING CREW

One of the notably strong characters among the early settlers of this vicinity was Captain Charles Church, who came here in 1807 from Westmoreland, N. H., where he had been a tavern keeper. He purchased 700 acres of land in the north part of Westminster, adjacent to Bellows Falls, and built three saw mills on Saxtons River, sending his product to the markets down the Connecticut river on rafts. He was a Revolutionary soldier having served in the Continental army two years during the war. During his early years here he was prominent in the militia, probably accounting for the title of "Captain" by which he was always known. He had a family of 20 children, and of these 12 sons and sons-in-law were members of his company. There are many descendants of the family still residing in this section of New England.

Captain Church's practice in relation to the handling of intoxicating liquors is interesting today, as showing the practices of the broad-minded men of his day. His family was always a large one, usually from 35 to 40, including his 20 children and employees. He always purchased his liquors by the barrel, of which he always kept a number of different kinds in his capacious cellar. The prominent variety was New England rum. He made the rule that all members of his family might partake twice a day, before breakfast and before supper. His children came under this rule as soon as they were large enough to "line up" with the older ones. At these times the Captain mixed his great bowl of toddy with

a stick, the bowl being a wooden one, which is still shown by his descendants. He ranged the whole family around the room and passed the bowl from one to the other. The rule was that each was to have a certain number of swallows, and if at any time anyone attempted to take more than his allowance the Captain said sharply, "Cut," which meant "enough," and if the partaker did not stop quick enough to suit him, a sharp rap with his toddy stick, which he held in his right hand, was always effective. Notwithstanding this free use of the liquors, it is noteworthy that there was never a member of the family who ever became intemperate.

In the Captain's employment of men to drive his large rafts of lumber down the Connecticut to the different city markets he made the rule that each raft take a 10-gallon cask of rum, which must do for the trip. While those in charge of the rafts had authority to procure from storekeepers along the route any provisions needed, charging them to Captain Church, all had instructions that he would not pay for any liquors furnished. At one time a raft was stranded some days on the island just above the village of Putney and the liquor was exhausted. A discussion was held regarding the method of supplying the absolutely necessary article. Old Peter Wood, whom present citizens remember as living on the back road to Westminster, was one of the gang and fertile in expedients. He took the 10-gallon cask and put in five gallons of river water. He was an extremely large and powerful man and shouldering the keg he carried it two miles up to the Putney storekeeper (all merchants then dealt in rum). He ordered five gallons "more rum" put in it, which was done, and

Wood shouldered the keg for the return. The merchant asked for his pay and Wood said "Charge it to Captain Church," which was refused because of the known rule of the Captain. After a little discussion Wood took down the keg from his shoulder, saying, "Well, take your d——d old five gallons of rum back again then," which the merchant did, putting it into his hogshead, supposing all in the keg to be rum. Wood then shouldered his keg containing five gallons of mixed rum and water, carrying it back to his companions, and they completed their cruise with the supply thus furnished.

It is a well authenticated tradition that Captain Church and his family were such regular attendants at Immanuel Episcopal Church on Sunday that on one occasion when they did not go, his old horse, recognizing the day, went to the church at the appointed hour and stood under the tree as usual until the services were concluded, when he walked home as demurely as if the family were with him.

## LAFAYETTE'S VISIT TO VERMONT IN 1825— SOCIAL CUSTOMS OF EARLY DAYS

Interesting recollections of the visit of General Lafayette to this vicinity in 1825 were given to the writer in 1898 by Mrs. Lucia Maria (Campbell) Wheaton, then 86 years old. She was born in this town December 31st, 1811, daughter of Dr. Alexander Campbell and Rhoda Corey, one of the earliest families of this town in the 18th century.

“ I remember well seeing General Lafayette,” she said “in 1825, when he made a visit to the United States and was the lion of the day. I was 14 years old. I lived in Bellows Falls. He was expected to dine with my uncle, Edward R. Campbell, at the neighboring town of Windsor. I went over there to see him. It was a pleasant summer day, and the street in front of the place where the general was to speak was crowded. He appeared on a balcony of the second story of a store. I was across the street in a shop looking out of a window. Governor Cornelius Van Ness of Vermont was with the general. I could not hear what Lafayette said but I do recall that he seemed to me like a small common man. His hair was rather long, and he had on a coat that was rather longer than those worn by the other men. Lafayette did not take dinner with my uncle as had been expected. He was making many towns and hadn't time to stop. So the nearest view I got of the great French soldier was from across a New England village street.”

When 6 years old Mrs. Wheaton went to school in the village of Rockingham to a teacher 16 years of age. She essayed the study of Latin at a tender age, but did not make a go of it, as the teacher knew no more of it than she did. From reading a primer with pictures and

hymns in it, she changed and "began to read Shakespeare and Milton's 'Paradise Lost and Regained.' Before I was 13 years old I had read the big poem and I understood all of it that was proper for me to know. Next I read Scott's novels and poems."

Added local interest is given to her description of the drinking habits of the leading families of that day from the fact that the old Campbell mansion, in which she was born and resided during her childhood, was the same stately old dwelling still standing across the street in Rockingham village from where the village hotel used to be, on the north side of the road leading to Saxtons River village. It is now owned by Natt L. Divoll and in a very dilapidated condition, but is a fine example of the architecture of a century and a quarter ago. It was built by Mrs. Wheaton's father in 1804.

"My father, Alexander Campbell, always dispensed liquors at home with a free hand" she said. "At Rockingham, during political campaigns, he had a large square table in one of the rooms, covered with decanters of various spirituous liquors. Then there were essences to flavor the drinks, particularly peppermint and checkerberry, and lemon and sugar. When a guest arrived he would go into the room and help himself. Rum was a favorite drink. A person would take a large glass, pour in about an inch of New England rum, then put in a spirit of essence, after that a cube of loaf sugar, and then fill up the glass with boiling water and drink it. The men in those days seemed to stand the liquor better than their descendants do now. I can remember of seeing only one drunken man during any political campaign.

"I remember that in the campaign of Jackson for president much was made of his shooting six soldiers after the battle of New Orleans. My father and his

family were Whigs. A brother kept a general store. A friend of his, a Mr. Taylor, who was a Baptist minister, was a Democrat and a warm supporter of Jackson for the presidency. This minister wrote to my father's brother in a jocular vein and ordered from his store a pound of 'Jackson.' My uncle, having in mind the shooting of those six men, sent him a pound of gunpowder. I was quite a child during all this discussion about shooting six soldiers and I got the idea into my head that if Jackson were elected president we would all be shot too. I suppose this was because my family was so bitterly opposed to him."

"Thanksgiving," Mrs. Wheaton said, "was a family festival. We had roast turkey, every kind of vegetable, pies and plum pudding, cider and plenty of New England rum, and other spirits. People could eat then and digest a big meal. They did more manual and less brain work. Christmas differed from Thanksgiving in that strangers were invited in to dine. We used to have regular course dinners—soup, oysters and so on. Sometimes the Christmas dinners were only for men—that is, specially served for parties of men. The Christmas tree and Christmas stocking are comparatively new institutions in New England. I was 16 years old before people began to hang up stockings on Christmas eve in Vermont. The custom was borrowed from Germany. So was the idea of the Christmas tree."



## CHARLESTOWN BANK ROBBERY RESULTS IN A MOST PECULIAR MANNER IN 1850

One of the most peculiar bank robberies that ever occurred in this vicinity was that of the old Connecticut River Bank at Charlestown, eight miles north of here, because of the circumstances of the immediate recovery of the booty, entirely by accident. It occurred on the night of June 10, 1850, and caused great interest and excitement in all this vicinity.

It was planned and carried out successfully up to a certain point by two brothers named Larned, who lived on a farm in Grafton County about 25 miles away. The banking building was the same now used by the Connecticut River National Bank. The burglars arrived in Charlestown about 9 o'clock in the evening with a team and soon went at their work. They were amateurs in the business, but the primitive safeguards of the vault were soon overcome and by midnight four locks had been picked and \$12,000 largely in specie was secured. The doors were all relocked and nothing indicated the robbery until the next morning when Cashier Olcott, father of the late George Olcott, opened the bank for business. The alarm was then given and in the absence of either telegraph or telephones messengers were started in all directions.

An unheard-of simple accident defeated the success of the scheme. They had loaded their booty into their buggy wagon and with a swift horse started for their home, thinking to reach there before daylight leaving no traces behind them. When they reached the foot of a long hill in Alstead they alighted to walk up the hill

and thus relieve their horse. While one of the brothers walked much faster than the horse the other fell some distance behind. The foremost one reached the top of the hill, and after some minutes the other emerged from the darkness, but the horse was nowhere to be seen.

They retraced their steps but the horse, buggy and money had all disappeared. They perceived a light in a farm house but no trace of the missing team. Daylight soon coming on they were obliged to give up the search and went home.

The horse had turned into an obscure wood road at right angles with the hill, and having no one to guide him had continued on several miles until the road came out on another main road in the town of Marlow. A man who had been out caring for a sick neighbor was going home about daylight and discovered the driverless horse meandering along the highway. He thought whoever owned the team would soon be along, and started to hitch it to the fence, when he was surprised to find a quantity of gold coin on the buggy-bottom. Investigation revealed the large amount, together with the false keys and a lot of tools. He took the team and its contents to his home in Marlow, and returned over the road he had come to Alstead, where he found messengers from Charlestown who had been sent out to give the alarm. Cashier Olcott and President ex-Gov. Hubbard of the bank went to Marlow and identified the money, of which not a dollar was missing.

The identity of the team was established and officers went to the home of the Larned brothers to arrest them but one had run away and was never apprehended. Abijah Larned, when confronted with the evidence, made

a complete detailed confession. He was bound over under \$2,500 bonds and paid all expense the bank had been put to, but when the time for trial came he forfeited his bonds and neither of the brothers was ever seen in that vicinity again. A few years later Abijah was arrested for robbing a bank in Cooperstown, N. Y., and sent to prison, where he died before the expiration of his sentence.

## FOUR BANK ROBBERIES ATTEMPTED AT BELLOWS FALLS

The first banking institution in Bellows Falls was the Bellows Falls Bank, organized in 1832 and merged into the National Bank of Bellows Falls in 1865. The same year they built a small, brick, one-story banking house on a lot on the west side of the Square, just where the tower of the present town hall stands. This was the only bank building in Bellows Falls until the erection of the present buildings of the National Bank and the Bellows Falls Savings Institution in 1875, and it was typical of hundreds of the New England banking buildings of a century ago.

Four times in the history of that first typical building were unsuccessful attempts made to burglarize it: November 5, 1864; March 14, 1866; April 30, 1867; and November 21, 1870. Since the last date no known attempt has been made to disturb local banks.

In the first attempt, Saturday night, November 5, 1864, the would-be robbers gained entrance to the banking room of the small building through the window fronting upon the Square, by bending upward the hasp which secured the lower sash. With powder they blew off a portion of the vault lock and succeeded in prying open the outer door. The inner door foiled them, probably from lack of time, and they departed, leaving some tools inside which they had stolen from the blacksmith shop of O. B. Arms. The attempt was not discovered until Sunday evening, when Hon. H. E. Stoughton, who resided in the brick dwelling near by, noticed the disarrangement of affairs. The bank was guarded through

the night, fearing a renewal of the effort. That the thieves were not experts was evident from their bungling methods of procedure.

The night of Wednesday, March 14, 1866, was selected for the second attempt. Access was gained by prying open the outside door. Powder was then used upon the vault door, but this time it resisted all efforts. It was not opened, the only damage being to the lock, which was injured so that it could not be used thereafter. In their retreat the robbers left a canister of powder, a piece of fuse and a cold chisel. Dr. O. F. Woods, who kept the hotel on the opposite side of the Square, about seven o'clock the next morning, noticed the blinds of the bank closed, which led to an investigation and the discovery of the attempted robbery. Two days later, a satchel was found upon the depot grounds containing two mallets, a burglar's jointed iron-bar, powder, fuse, and some clothing. It was ascertained that three men, evidently those connected with the break, went toward Rutland on the morning train. Two left the train at Chester, and the third, giving his name as Thomas McCormick, was arrested at Rutland and proved to be a professional cracksman. He was brought here and had a hearing, March 20, 1866, before Justice Alexander S. Campbell, who held him in the sum of \$750 bail for trial at county court. Bail was furnished by the late Charles Towns, which the man forfeited, the money paying the same being sent from New York by McCormick's friends. He was a young man and in later years was known as a professional rogue.

Tuesday night, April 30, 1867, the third attempt was made. The building was entered through a window

upon the south side. No explosive was used, but the outer vault door was opened by means of bars, prying in, and through, the key-hole. This evidently took so long that there was no time for further effort, there being still two more, and still stronger, doors to open. As before, the tools were secured from the Arms blacksmith shop. The same night an attempt was made to blow open the safe in the hardware store of Arms & Willson.

The fourth and last attempt to rob the bank was made Monday night, November 21, 1870, and was evidently the work of experts. Entrance was gained by prying open the street door. The burglars succeeded in removing the casings of the outer door to the vault, getting as far as the second of the three doors that guarded the money. Either they were frightened away, or they lacked for time, as there was no evidence of any work upon the second door. They left in the room the most complete set of burglar's tools ever seen in this vicinity, consisting of two new jack-screws, a heavy sledge-hammer, and a large variety of wedges, bars, and chisels of all sizes and of the best workmanship. The bars were made to be put together in sections like fish-poles, and many of the implements were supplied with duplicate handles. Upon leaving, they swung the door of the vault together and the attempt was not discovered until James H. Williams (2nd) opened the bank for business the next morning.

In only one of the above attempts was there ever secured any evidence to warrant an arrest.

## THE TOWN POUND—EARLY TOWN OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

In the records of the first Rockingham Town Meetings occur the names of several town officers whose duties are not known to the residents of today. Among them are "Tything-men," "Field-drivers," "Pound-keepers," "Deer-reaves" and "Hog-reaves." Reference to the early records of town meetings will show record of election of these officers each year, and the names of the first incumbents of these offices.

Tything-men were more prominent in duties about the old-fashioned meeting houses than elsewhere, but they were a kind of general police of the town. The name is of Anglo-Saxon origin and means the chief man of a tything or parish. It was their duty to keep order in public assemblies, particularly in the meeting house on the Lord's Day. In the old church at Rockingham village the tything-men of the town occupied the seats nearest the pulpit and with their crooked staff five feet long, as insignia of office, they used to keep a watchful eye over the audience and presumably reached out to awaken the unfortunate sleepers, if the disturbance of snoring became too loud. He was a terror to the small boy disposed to be uneasy or mischievous, and it is in this respect that tradition most frequently connects him. Many other important duties, however, were required of the tything-man. It was his duty to inspect taverns, keep an eye upon strangers and suspicious characters, and they could arrest without a warrant offenders against the law. It was their duty to detain travelers

upon the highway on the Sabbath unless it could be shown that travel was necessitated.

A number of the duties required of them are now performed by other officers, and some of the duties are obsolete, as is the office. The office was considered important, and only the most staid and substantial citizens were elected to it. The first town meeting, held in 1761, elected but one tything-man, Samuel Burr, while the second elected two, Thomas Stebbins and William Simonds. The usual practice was to have two, each to be from a different section of the town. Other towns in the vicinity often had a larger number, Keene, N. H., electing 15 in the year 1815, only seven of whom qualified.

The duties of the two field-drivers and of the pound-keeper were about the same. The field-drivers elected at the first town meeting were Amaziah Wright and William Simonds. At the second town meeting, 1762, it was voted to build a pound and William Simonds was chosen pound-keeper also. For many years after the settlement of Rockingham, most of the unimproved lands were held in common by all citizens. It was the duty of the field-drivers, and later of the pound-keeper, to impound all animals running at large upon the public roads, the common lands, or upon private lands without the consent of the land owners. For such services they received a fine of one shilling each for cattle and horses, and three-pence each for sheep and swine which had to be paid by the owner before the animals could be taken from the custody of the officer. Much trouble arose between early residents because of this practice, as it was often



open to question when animals were astray, or off the owner's premises.

The first pound was located a mile or two north of the Village of Rockingham, on the farm and near the dwelling of Captain William Simonds. It stood on the north side of the road, near the top of the hill beyond what is now known as the Jonas Aldrich place, near the Bellows Falls Country Club. Later one was established on the Capt. Michael Lovell farm south of the road from Rockingham village to Chester and a short distance beyond the turn to Lawrence's Mills. Various other pounds have been located in different parts of the town during its history.

## UNIQUE CATTLE AND SHEEP MARKS—LOTTERIES FOR BUILDING BRIDGES AND CHURCHES

The records of the town of Rockingham, in which the Village of Bellows Falls is today the principal village, show very many quaint and curious customs of early days. The records are complete and perfectly legible from the granting of the charter by King George, through his governor, Benning Wentworth of the Province of New Hampshire, down to the present time. The date of the charter, granting all the land to fifty-nine men, was December 28th, 1752, and these Proprietors' Records during the nine years they handled all the business of the town, comprise the first volume. During all these years Colonel Benjamin Bellows, for whom the village was afterwards named, was the "Proprietors' Clark" and signed the records of every meeting, although a resident of Walpole. In 1761 the actual residents then in the town gathered and held their first meeting, electing their own full board of officers, and complete records of every town meeting from then down to the present time are available. On the occasion of the fire which destroyed the town building May 10th, 1925, these records were saved, being in the safety vault, and are now in the vault of the new building.

Among the interesting records previous to the beginning of the last century are those indicating the methods of identifying the ownership of the cattle, sheep, hogs and other live stock before the various farms were fenced. The cattle and other domestic animals ran in the woods and clearings, and before being turned

out in the spring all stock was required to be marked in such manner that they might be identified, and the ownership proven. The marking was usually done by disfiguring the ears, and the records show very many certificates of the different devices that were used. Each man had a mark which was registered by the town clerk, and among the great number the following are samples:

Vol. 4, page 246, "Luther Webb Cattle mark Swallow Tale in Right Ear. Recorded by me Jonathan Burt Town Clerk."

Page 242, "Ely Evans Cattle Mark being a half crop on the Right Ear;—Recorded by me this 24th Day of December 1810. Jonathan Burt Town Clerk."

Page 289, "The Cattle & Sheep marke of Samuel Marsh of Rockingham in Windham County & State of Vermont being two holes in the right ear & one hole in the left ear, rec'd 11th day of April, 1812 & rec. by me Jonathan Burt Town Clerk."

Page 53, "Quartus Morgan Sheep mark crop off of both Ears Recorded by me Jonathan Burt Town Clerk."

Page 112, "David Wood Junr Cattle & Sheep mark being a 10 in the left Ear. Recorded by Jonathan Burt Town Clerk."

Vol. 6, Page 19, "Sheep mark of David Campbell Esqr of Rockingham. The end of the left Ear cut Square & a notch on the under side of the same Ear. Rec'd February ye 21st 1816 recorded by me Joseph Weed Town Clerk."

Vol. 6, page 2, "Dexter Newtons Sheep Mark is both Ears cut square about one third of the length off,

& a slit in Each Ear Recd October 19, 1815, and recorded by me Joseph Weed Town Clerk.”

Vol. 1, page 300, “Frederick Reades marke for Stock Neat may ye 27 1769, on the Left Ear a happeny off the under side and a Slit on the End of the same. Jehial Webb, Reg’r.”

The practice of raising money for lotteries for public or charitable purposes was sanctioned by the Vermont legislature in those early days, as it was in most other states. A number of the early bridges in this town were built by the aid of these lotteries. Up to about the year 1825, or a century ago, many petitions were granted by the legislature for establishing lotteries for building and repairing bridges; to aid in erecting a brewery, a court house, to repair losses by fire, and at least one was presented asking for a grant of a lottery to build a church. The files of the early years of the Bellows Falls Intelligencer, a newspaper established in 1817, contained each week for a number of years the advertisements of these lotteries, stating the purposes for which the “drawing” was to be made. The usual place where lottery tickets were kept for sale here was at the toll house at the Connecticut river bridge, probably because of there being so many passers-by, to whom the glittering possibilities would be a temptation.

## A CURIOUS CUSTOM OF "WARNING OUT OF TOWN" ALL NEW-COMERS

A curious custom, prevalent to a large extent in most of the New England states a century ago, was that of "Warning Out of Town" new-comers, fearing they might become town charges. In Vermont this law was in effect 38 years and in New Hampshire 119 years. It was in accordance with a statute of the states whereby, if the town so voted, and legal notices was served upon the new-comers within the first year of their residence in town, the persons so warned were prevented from gaining a residence, and the towns escaped liability for support should they ever become dependent.

As early as 1769, eight years after the organization of this town's government, the record of the town meeting shows "Voted that all Strangers who Com to Inhabit in said town being Not Freeholders be warned out of town." This process implied nothing against the character of the party or individual, and it often happened that such warned persons eventually became honored and wealthy citizens. In one or two instances such persons in later years represented the town in the Vermont legislature. During the year 1808 the constables rendered bills to the town for having "warned out" 31 families, and in 1809 it was 26 families. In the town of Newbury, Vt., there were warned out at one time 126 persons.

The legal form of the warning, used in cases to the number of hundreds who came into this town between the years mentioned, was as shown by the following sample. In both these cases the men described became

prominent citizens in later years. Both have descendants still living here, and the record of each family is an honorable one. Mr. Divoll represented the town in legislature for three terms about 20 years later.

“STATE OF VERMONT}

Windham County ss } To either constable of  
Rockingham in the County of Windham,—Greeting.  
You are hereby commanded to summon Samuel Billings,  
Susannah Billings, Susannah Billings, 2d, Sarah Divoll  
and Manassah Divoll now residing in Rockingham to  
depart said town. Hereof fail not but of this precept  
and your doings thereon, due return make according to  
law. Given under our hand at Rockingham this 12th  
day of March, 1807.

Elijah Knight } Selectmen  
David Wood } of  
Alex. Campbell } Rockingham

“Windham ss, Rockingham, 14th March, 1807,  
Then I served this precept by leaving a true and at-  
tested copy of same with each of the within named Sam-  
uel Billings, Sarah Divoll and Manassah Divoll.

Elijah Mead, Constable.

“Fees \$.56 Recd. 9th April 1807, recorded by  
Jonathan Burt, Town Clerk.”

Henry Atkinson Green, who in after years became a member of the well known mercantile firm of Hall & Green, and who was the father of Edward H. Green, the husband of Hetty Green, was served the “warning out” process November 12, 1811, by Constable Ebenezer Locke.

Massachusetts had this system beginning in 1692 for 135 years, and Connecticut 127 years from 1669. The practice was abolished in Vermont in 1817. As all

new-comers had to have this notice served upon them within the first year of coming into a town, in many instances a census of new-comers was made, telling when they came, and thus these lists are valuable records of genealogical data which could not be found in any other way. The records thus being accurate are frequently consulted by both historians and genealogists.

KEY TO THE OLD ROCKINGHAM MEETING  
HOUSE SOLD AT AUCTION—TOWN PAUPERS  
SOLD TO THE HIGHEST BIDDERS

The early records of the town of Rockingham carry many interesting indications of the quaint and primitive conditions of those early years.

At the annual town meeting in March, 1803, the key to the meeting house, which had been built in 1787 and is still standing, was put up at auction and struck off to the lowest bidder. James Marsh bid it off for the sum of \$2.50 for the year. By the terms of the bid he gave bonds to unlock and lock the house every Sunday morning and evening, and at all other public meetings, at all times, on a penalty of four cents for every neglect of duty. He also agreed to sweep the house four times a year, that is during the first week in every three months and for every failure in sweeping he was to forfeit the sum of 50 cents. It is not to be supposed that \$2.50 was considered as sufficient to pay for the services rendered by Mr. Marsh, but the honor of the thing was a consideration then, as now, to the office holder. It was no small trust, that of having charge of the key of both the town house and the house of God, and if the people had not at that day considered the office of sweeper of some importance, it would not have been necessary to have required bonds for the faithful discharge of the duty.

In the year 1791 occurred the first sale of a white woman at public auction, a practice which was kept up by the town for many years thereafter, the records showing sales, who the paupers were, and to whom they were sold. In that year Mrs. Burr, a town pauper, was



sold at public vendue. She was bought by Capt. John Roundy. She was "bid off at five shillings per week, to be paid in wheat at five shillings per bushel. People at this day will perhaps be at a loss to understand this traffic in human flesh. It was not a sale like those made at the slave markets of the South and yet it was an inhuman practice now done away with. The poor of the different towns were put up at auction and the persons who bid to take care of them the cheapest were called the purchasers for the coming year. Thus John Roundy received one bushel of wheat per week for taking care of, feeding and clothing Mrs. Burr. A few of the smaller towns in Vermont and some other states, have kept up this practice until within the last 40 or 50 years. In several instances during those early years there were cases of greed which caused the parties who had bid off the paupers not to furnish proper food and clothing so that suffering occurred, and one notable instance during the last years of the practice occurred when it was said that a woman who had been "sold" was actually starved to death, not in Rockingham, however.

## A CURIOUS CENSUS ERROR REPORTED 17 SLAVES HELD IN VERMONT IN 1790

A clerical error in the office of the United States Census Bureau in its report of the first census taken in Vermont in 1790 makes that report say that there were 17 negro slaves in Vermont that year, as against the generally understood and frequently repeated assertion that no person was ever held in bondage in this state. Vermont declared against slavery in 1777, and that declaration has always been adhered to.

It is true that the printed report of the United States census of 1790 gave sixteen slaves to Vermont, all of them in Bennington County. But it has long been known that that first census, as given to the public, contained numerous errors, and that this assignment of slaves to Vermont was one of them.

The facts are that in consequence of the discovery of many errors in the reports of previous censuses, Gen. Francis A. Walker, superintendent of the census of 1870, instituted a critical comparison of the printed reports of previous censuses with the manuscript returns of the same on file in the census bureau. In the course of this examination Mr. George D. Harrington, chief clerk of the bureau, made the important discovery that in compiling the returns of Vermont the careless clerk or copyist who did the work transferred the footing of the column of "free colored" persons to the foot of the adjoining column of "slaves." Gen. Walker, in his introduction to ninth census report, noted the discovery in the following words:—

“A single result of these examinations into the earliest censuses has enough of curious and substantial interest to be noted here. The State of Vermont was, in the publication of the first census, that of 1790, put down as numbering among its inhabitants sixteen slaves. In subsequent publications this number was by a clerical or typographical error changed to seventeen; but with this accidental variation the statement of the first census has passed unchallenged; and antiquarians have even taken pains to explain in what manner it was this small number of slaves should have been found in a State otherwise through all its history a free State. The reexamination of the original census roll of Vermont at the census of 1790, for the purpose of this republication, brought to light what had never before been suspected—that these sixteen persons appeared upon the return of the assistant marshal as “Free colored.” By a simple error of compilation they were introduced into a column for slaves; and this error has been perpetuated through nearly the whole history of the government until corrected in the accompanying tables.” (See page 46 of Introduction to the volume of Population of the Census of 1870.)

Under the corrected table for Vermont on a subsequent page of that volume will be found the following note: “An examination of the original manuscript returns shows that there were never any slaves in Vermont. The original error occurred in preparing the result for publication when sixteen persons returned as ‘free colored’ were classified as ‘slaves.’ ”

It is certainly remarkable that this erroneous assignment of slaves to Vermont should have gone uncorrected for eighty years. It was not because Vermonters of that day did not know better, for the Vermont Gazette, printed at Bennington by Anthony Haswell, in its issue

of Sept. 26, 1791, said, "The return of the marshal's assistant for the county of Bennington shows that there are in the county 2503 white males over sixteen years of age, and 2617 under that age; 5559 white females; 17 black males over 4 and under 16; 15 black females. Total of inhabitants 12,254. To the honor of humanity, no slaves."

## AZARIAH WRIGHT OF WESTMINSTER—HE WAS NOT EXCOMMUNICATED

Westminster, our nearest neighbor on the south, has an interesting history replete with many remarkable incidents which have never been gathered into a much needed volume of town history. An incident of which an account was printed in London, as early as 1797, in Dr. John Andrew Graham's book, "A Descriptive Sketch of the Present State of Vermont," describes the typical independent spirit of a farmer, Azariah Wright, a member of the Westminster Congregational church, the second Protestant church in Vermont.

After describing the noted piety and strength of character of Mr. Wright, and telling of his being greatly troubled by the depredations of a large bear in his corn field, which bear had seemingly come to know that on Sunday Mr. Wright was always in church, the narrative continues:—

"At last it had learned its cue so thoroughly, as only to commit its depredations on the Lord's day, when it knew from experience that the coast was clear. Wearied out with these oft repeated trespasses, the good man resolved on the next Sunday to stay in his fields, where with his gun he concealed himself. The bear came according to custom. He fired and shot it dead. The explosion threw the whole congregation (for it was about the hour of people's assembling for worship) into consternation.

The cause was inquired into and as soon as the pastor, deacon and others became acquainted with it, they called a special meeting of the church, and cited the offending member before them to show cause, if any he had, why he should not be excommunicated out of

Christ's church for this daring and unexampled impiety. In vain did he urge from the Scriptures themselves that it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. He pleaded before judges determined to condemn him, and the righteous parson, elders and church, 'una voce,' agreed to drive him out from among them as polluted and accursed.

“Accordingly he was enjoined (as is the custom on such occasions) on the next Sabbath to attend his excommunication in the church. He did attend, but not entirely satisfied with the sentence, and too much of a soldier to be scandalized in so public a manner for any action which he conceived to be his duty, he resolved to have recourse to stratagem. He therefore went to the appointment with his gun loaded with a brace of balls, his sword and cartridge box by his side, and his knapsack on his back, with six days' provision in it. Service was about half over when he entered the sanctuary in his martial array. He marched leisurely into a corner and took his position. As soon as the benediction was ended, the holy parson began the excommunication, but scarcely had he pronounced the words 'offending brother' when the honest old veteran cocked and levelled his weapon of destruction, at the same time crying out with a loud voice, 'Proceed if you dare, proceed and you are a dead man.' At this unexpected attack the astonished clergyman shrunk behind his desk, and his opponent with great deliberation recovered his arms. Some moments elapsed before the parson had courage to peep from behind his ecclesiastical battery. On finding the old hero had come to a rest, he tremblingly reached the order to his eldest deacon, desiring him to read it. the deacon with stammering accents and eyes staring with wild affright began as he was commanded, but no sooner had he done so, than the devoted victim again leveled his piece, and more vehemently than before exclaimed, 'Desist and march, I will not live with shame. Desist and march, I say, or you are all dead men.'

Little need had he to repeat his threats. The man of God leaped from the desk and escaped. The deacons, elders and congregation followed in equal trepidation. The greatest confusion prevailed. The women with shrieks and cries sought their homes, and the victor was left undisturbed master of the field, and of the church, too, the doors of which he calmly locked, put the keys in his pocket, and sent them, with his respects, to the pastor. He then marched home with all the honors of war, lived 14 years afterwards and always remained a brother in full communion.”

This story is well authenticated. It was published in somewhat different language in an old almanac about 1800 by Asa Houghton. A former well known resident of Westminster named Wright wrote over 20 years ago as follows to the writer:—

“I think the story as published in London in 1797 is reliable for it is substantially the same as told by my grandfather, Caleb Wright (a son of the captain) and repeated to me by my parents in my childhood. My grandfather used to say that his father, Azariah, had a voice like a lion; and when he gave to the panic-stricken congregation the word of command ‘*March*’ there was but one thing to do. Grandfather enjoyed telling about the queer things certain people said and did, and how the women shrieked in their desperate hurry to get out of the meeting-house.”

THOMAS GREEN FESSENDEN—FIRST EDITOR  
OF THE FIRST BELLOWS FALLS NEWSPAPER  
—BECAME OF WORLD-WIDE FAME

The first editor of the first newspaper published in Bellows Falls was Thomas Green Fessenden, a man widely known in this country and in England for his marked peculiarities and writings. He was a writer of both poetry and prose of much force. During his entire mature life he was a celebrity of note, interest and importance. He established the "Vermont Intelligencer and Bellows Falls Advertiser," in January 1, 1817, and edited it until he went to Boston and there established the "New England Farmer" in 1822.

He was born in Walpole, N. H., April 22, 1771, a son of Rev. Thomas Fessenden, the second town minister of Walpole, who served the town for 46 successive years (1767 to 1813). He graduated from Dartmouth College in 1796 and studied law in the office of Nathaniel Chipman at Rutland, Vt. He went to England in 1801 where he wrote extensively and published several volumes, which appeared in both England and America.

In 1805 he returned to America, being in New York City and Philadelphia until 1808, when he came to Brattleboro. In 1812 he established a law practice in Bellows Falls, which he continued while editing the local paper. One of his warm personal friends during his lifetime was Nathaniel Hawthorne, who said of him at one time that he "was ill qualified to succeed in the profession of the law, by his simplicity of character, and his utter inability to acquire an ordinary share of shrewdness and worldly wisdom." He was married Septembred 5, 1813,



while at Bellows Falls, to Miss Lydia Tuttle, a daughter of John Tuttle, of Littleton, Mass., who was visiting relatives in this village. His residence after 1822 was largely in Boston, as an editor of several newspapers, and writer of well known books. At one time he was interested in the silk industry, which in the '30s spread over New England and was for a while a prominent factor in Bellows Falls business. He died in Boston in 1837 and was interred in Mount Auburn cemetery.

During Mr. Fessenden's residence in Bellows Falls he boarded at Robertson's Tavern, which was erected in 1816, the year before he made Bellows Falls his residence. The proprietor was John Robertson, and his son, Richardson Robertson, was then a boy employed about the hostelry. The latter gave the writer many years ago an interesting account of Mr. Fessenden as he remembered him. Although Mr. Robertson was then a young boy he remembered Mr. Fessenden clearly. He described him as a tall man of very robust stature and constitution, dark complexion and with a rather forbidding aspect, always full of fun and the life of any party in which he might be. Many of his various publications that contributed to making him famous were written by him while in Bellows Falls, living in that early hotel. Among them was a volume entitled "The Ladies' Monitor," which was a poem of 130 pages, giving excellent advice to young ladies in a doggerel rhyme, the whole being of considerable merit. A copy of this book was in the ownership of the late George O. Guild of this place, and highly prized as the paper was made in the first paper mill here, in which in later years Mr. Guild was employed. It was printed and

bound by Bill Blake & Co., who owned and operated the first paper mill here; the covers of the volume were made of birch wood cut thin and covered with colored paper, this being the usual method of binding books in those early days.

Mr. Robertson said that Mr. Fessenden was an excellent singer, and during his college course supported himself by teaching in town schools, while in his vacations he taught music, and held singing classes and singing schools in the evenings. He was devoted to his cello, or bass viol, as it was then called, and while here kept it behind the dining room door of the hotel. On this instrument he often played when the meals were late, amusing himself to the edification of the patrons of the hotel.

The office of the "Intelligencer" was in the second story of a frame building standing where what is now the Corner Drug Store stands, between Westminster and Mill Streets, and it is understood that, as he did the editorial work there, he had his law office there also. Bill Blake & Co.'s wholesale and retail book store occupied the first story, and during a few years about that time the firm published many noted books, Bibles, Testaments and others for their own store and the Boston market. Mr. Fessenden wrote and published in his paper a consecration hymn that was used at the opening of the first frame Immanuel (Episcopal) church when it was consecrated by Bishop Griswold September 24, 1817. He was probably among the most widely known and eminent men who have ever made Bellows Falls their home, in all its history, having had a marked and favorable reputation on two continents.

APPRENTICING POOR BOYS—DOCUMENT BY  
THOMAS GREEN FESSENDEN

A most interesting legal document over a century old recently came to light among papers connected with the town history, which had lain many years in the attic of a former selectman. It shows the seemingly hard-hearted system of contracting by the town for the care of dependent children, or “apprenticing” them, as it was then called.

The paper is also of value now to the souvenir hunter as it was written in long hand in the bold penmanship of Thomas Green Fessenden, who practiced law in this village from 1812 to 1822; was the first editor of the first newspaper printed here; a prominent member of Immanuel (Episcopal) church; published a number of books, both during his residence in England and in America; and was widely known in his day on two continents.

Also, the document is written on very heavy book paper, made by hand in the first paper mill established here by Bill Blake, and is a striking example of local paper makers’ art. The contract follows:—

“This Indenture made the 12th day of August in the year of our Lord 1820 witnesseth that Solomon Hapgood and Ebenezer Locke, overseers of the poor of the Town of Rockingham in the County of Windham and State of Vermont have put and placed and by these presents do put and place William Clap Wells, a poor boy of said Town of Rockingham, aged about nine years an apprentice to Jon<sup>a</sup>. Sleeper of Unity in the County of Cheshire and State of New Hampshire with him to dwell and serve from the day of the date of these presents until said apprentice shall accomplish the full age

of twenty-one years, or eleven years from the 28th day of December next, according to the statute in such case made and provided, during which term the said apprentice, his said master faithfully shall serve on all lawful business, according to his power and ability, and shall honestly, orderly and obediently in all things demean and behave himself toward his said master, and all his during said term.

“And the said Joanthan Sleeper, for himself, his executors and administrators doth covenant and agree with said overseers of the poor as aforesaid, and each of them, their and each of their successors in office for the time being, by these presents, that he the said William, the said apprentice in the trade of husbandman or farmer, which the said Jon<sup>a</sup>. Sleeper now useth Shall and Will instruct or cause to be taught and instructed, and during all the time aforesaid find, provide and allow unto said apprentice competent and sufficient meat, drink and apparel, washing, lodging, mending and all other things necessary and fit for an apprentice; and Shall and Will instruct or cause said apprentice to be instructed in reading and writing, and common arithmetic, and also shall and will so provide for the said apprentice that he be not in any way chargeable to the said Town of Rockingham or the inhabitants thereof; but of and from all charges shall save the said Town and the inhabitants thereof harmless, and indemnified during the said term; and at the end of said term Shall and Will make, allow and provide and deliver to said apprentice one good new suit of holiday clothes, and two other good suits for every day wear.

“In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals interchangeably on the day and year above written,—

In presence of

Thos G. Fessenden

Isaac Sturtevant

Benj<sup>a</sup>. Quimby

Benj<sup>a</sup>. Quimby, Jr.

Jonathan Sleeper L. S.

Solomon Hapgood L. S.

Eben<sup>r</sup> Locke L. S.”

## ROCKINGHAM IN THE WAR OF 1812

While the records of this town are very complete regarding the action of the voters on all questions of general policy during the Revolutionary War, the Civil War and the World War, there is only one reference to the War of 1812 with England.

A town meeting September 28, 1812, has this record:

“2dly, it was motioned & seconded to see if the town will raise money to make up the deficiency of the soldiers wages who are gone to Burlington from said Rockingham, and said motion was passed in the negative.

“3dly voted to raise One cent on the dollar, or on the list of 1812, for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the Militia who are gone to Burlington.”

Throughout this town, as well as throughout the state, there was evidently a wide divergence of opinion regarding the wisdom or necessity of the war. As a whole the state was very evenly divided between the two political parties of that day, the Republican, known as “The War Party,” and the Federalist, known as “The Peace Party.”

At the outbreak of the war the Republicans were in the ascendancy in Vermont and Governor Galusha took the necessary action for raising Vermont's quota (3,000) of the 100,000 militia asked for by President Madison. The Legislature in October, 1812, following the declaration of war, authorized the raising of troops for service and levied additional taxes on lands for the support and arming of the militia. It also passed an act prohibiting any person from crossing the Canadian line,

or transporting any goods or merchandise across the boundary without permission of the governor, under a penalty of \$1,000 fine and seven years' imprisonment.

These measures were considered by many of the people as oppressive, and great bitterness of feeling sprang up between the two parties. Governor Galusha ordered the militia to do duty at Plattsburg, N. Y., thereby displeasing the peace party, the members of which claimed that the troops should not be taken outside the state.

The action of this town, as stated, probably refers to the militia sent to Plattsburg, and from taking such action it is evident that the majority disapproved of the policy of the State Government. Many Vermonters who had at first favored the war now left the Republican ranks and went over to the Federal party. By the time the elections were held, in the fall of 1813, party spirit was running high, so much so that harmony between families in some instances was destroyed. There was no election of governor that year by the people, and the legislature elected the Federal candidate, Martin Chittenden, by a small majority.

During these years Bill Blake was one of the most prominent citizens of Bellows Falls, owning the paper mills then located there, and taking a very aggressive part with the Peace party. He had occasion to visit the northern part of the state on business, and a long sworn statement from him appears in the "Washingtonian," a paper published at Windsor at that time. He gave a vivid description of the conditions this side of the border, having been held up six or eight times during

his trip, and his sleigh examined for goods many miles this side of the border. He claimed the officials patrolling that section were less courteous and polite than they are reputed to be now, 115 years later. Times change, and each decade and century has its own problems to solve.

THE FIRST PAPER MILL IN VERMONT BUILT  
IN BELLOWS FALLS IN 1802 BY BILL BLAKE

The first paper mill in the vicinity of Bellows Falls was built in the year 1799, by Bill Blake. This mill was located at Alstead, N. H., which has taken its other name, "Paper Mill Village," from that fact. Alstead is five miles from Bellows Falls. Mr. Blake came to Bellows Falls in 1802, and, procuring a right to water power from the "Company for Rendering Connecticut River Navigable by Bellows Falls," built the first paper mill in the state of Vermont directly in the rear of where the stone grist mill now stands. It was a small, primitive affair, burned in 1812, and replaced at once by Mr. Blake, with a mill 144 feet long and 32 feet wide, with a number of ells and storehouses. A portion of the mill was two stories high, but the larger part was three stories. This mill was destroyed by fire July 12, 1846, from which date the site was unoccupied, and there was no paper mill in Bellows Falls until 1870. In January of that year, William A. Russell started the first modern paper machine "under the hill," Albert C. Moore, later of the Moore & Thompson Paper Company, being his first machine tender.

The "cylinder" and "Foudrinier" types of machines of today are a long call from the primitive method used by Bill Blake over a century ago. The water power of the river was then used only for grinding the rags and reducing the "stuff" to the proper consistency for the grades of paper to be made. Today a paper machine is running in Gatineau, Que., producing a sheet 272 inches wide and running at a speed



of 1,000 feet a minute, and another machine is being built to run the same speed and make a sheet 372 inches wide.

It is interesting to contrast this with the methods employed at the time Mr. Blake's first mill was built here. The product of that mill at first was wholly writing and book paper. The stock used in making the paper was clean white rags, sorted at tables by girls, and cut up on old scythes set into the tables. It was not necessary to bleach them and the fine stock went directly to the beating engine for macerating, that process being then about the same as now. The "stuff" (as it is called in the paper mills), after being prepared, was run into tanks standing two or three feet high, and the paper from this point was made wholly by hand instead of by the complicated machinery of today. In a small frame, made to correspond with the size of the sheet of paper to be produced, was fixed a wire cloth or screen, similar in grade to the wires now in use on the large machines. With this sieve in hand, the paper maker stood beside the vat, and dipping it into the stuff, enough adhered to it to form the sheet when taken out. This sieve was then turned upside down on a felt of the same size, a paper board was laid on the sheet, and another felt was then put on the board, and the operation repeated until 200 or 300 sheets had been made.

The pile, then three or four feet high, was placed in a large press with an immense screw similar to that in a cider mill press, and by the aid of long levers in the head of the screw, the water was squeezed out of the pile. The sheets of paper were peeled from between the felts and hung up singly, on poles, in a drying room

with open sides like a corn crib, until thoroughly dried. They were then taken down and each sheet scraped with a knife to remove all imperfections, in what was termed a "saul room."

A few years ago, a number of curiously worn stones were found by the late Stephen R. Wales in the vicinity of the eddy below the mills. He at once recognized them as being the same as those used by the girls in sharpening their knives with which to scrape this paper many years ago. They also used them to sharpen the pieces of scythes with which the rags were cut. Mr. Wales used to work in the mill as a boy. The process of putting on the finish was the same in principle as that of today, the use of heavy calendar rolls, from which they went to the finishing room to be packed and shipped to market. The amount of product from this method of manufacture was very small and prices were necessarily extremely high, as compared with those of today.

In 1820, an inventor came to Bellows Falls who had partially perfected a machine for taking the place of the hand work and hand sieve. It was the pioneer of the cylinder and Foudrinier machines now in general use. He arranged with Bill Blake to test his principle and one of his machines was built. While it was in process of building, feeling ran high against the inventor among the old employees of the mill here, because they foresaw the coming change which would, as they thought, leave them out of work. At one time they seriously considered that the proper thing to do would be to "ride him out of town on a rail," but the machine was installed and brought a revolution in methods of paper manufacture without lasting detriment to labor.

BILL BLAKE—FIRST PAPER MAKER—FIRST  
PRINTER—FIRST NEWSPAPER PUBLISHER

It is probable that in the very early history of Bellows Falls and this vicinity no one man contributed more to the welfare, growth and business industry of all this section than did Bill Blake, the owner of the first paper mill in all this vicinity, the first paper mill in Vermont, the first printing office and bindery and the first newspaper in Bellows Falls.

Bill Blake was born in Dorchester, Mass., April 2, 1774, and died in Saxtons River Village December 4, 1856, of paralysis. He came to Alstead, N. H. (five miles from Bellows Falls) in 1799, the year of his marriage, and built there the same year the first paper mill ever erected in all this locality. He had a partner there named Kingsbury. In 1802 he removed to Bellows Falls and here built the first paper mill at any point in Vermont during that year. The firm name then, and for many years thereafter, was Bill Blake & Co. In 1812 this mill, as well as all the others which had been erected on the canal here, was destroyed by fire. Among the other manufacturies said to have been burned at this time were "a fine armory, shops and manufacturies, entailing a loss of from \$30,000 to \$40,000."

This paper mill was at once rebuilt by Mr. Blake, and in 1814 he was interested in the firm of Andrew Henderson & Co., which built the first paper mill at Wells River, Vt. He owned the paper mill in Bellows Falls until 1824, when he sold it to Green & Fleming. Mr. Blake then went a mile out from this village on the Saxtons river in the locality known as "The Forest."

He there built another paper mill, five dwelling houses, a large saw mill, and had an extensive general store in one room of the paper mill. He owned a large tract of land between the Forest and Saxtons River village and used his saw mill in cutting the lumber therefrom. The mill erected in 1824 at the Forest was destroyed by high water Saturday, March 25, 1826. With an energetic perseverance, which yielded to no discouragement, he immediately erected another mill and built a heavy stone bulkhead above it to hold the water, conveying the same to the mill by a penstock, which was the first ever used in this locality. There were at that time three dams across the river in the Forest. His erection of the last mill at this point made six different paper mills which he had built.

In 1836 his three sons, William, Leonard and Schuyler, purchased the mill property at the Forest, and the father went to Saxtons River village and purchased the iron factory there, which he operated until he retired from active business in 1849. From this time until his death in 1856 he enjoyed the fruits of his industry and indomitable perseverance.

The three sons carried on the paper business at the Forest until 1849, when May 9, that mill also, together with the large barn standing near by, was destroyed by fire, caused by combustion in rags. The old saw mill standing a little farther up the stream was then rebuilt into a paper mill by William and Schuyler Blake and operated a number of years by them. Leonard Blake died in 1849. In 1859 the mill had stood vacant some years and was then leased to Durant & Adams of Wells River. It later passed into the hands of Elisha S. Sabin,

and after some years was again destroyed by fire. Mr. Sabin then moved an old woolen mill down from Grafton that was afterward burned while occupied as a shoddy mill by John E. Brown.

During the active business life at Bellows Falls of Capt. Bill Blake, between 1802 and 1824, in addition to his paper mill enterprises, which were on an extensive scale for that period, sending his paper to Boston by team as there were no railroads, he established the first printing office here and entered largely into the publishing of school books. The first edition of the Bible to be printed in Vermont was issued from his press in large quarto form. In 1817 he established and published the first newspaper here "The Vermont Intelligencer and Bellows Falls Advertiser," employing Thomas Green Fessenden as the first editor. Mr. Blake established the first book bindery and book store in Bellows Falls and had, in addition, a dry goods and grocery store. The book store and book bindery was in the first story of a frame building that stood where the Corner Drug Store now does on the corner of Westminster Street and the Square, and the printing office was in the second story of the same building.

During these early years of Mr. Blake's activities he had teams out in all this section of Vermont and New Hampshire buying old rags of the householders. These he manufactured into fine grades of paper in his paper mill, on which books in large numbers were printed by him and bound in his bindery. These were kept for sale, in connection with his weekly newspaper, in his book store, which was a large one for those early times. This made a unique record of complete produc-

tion from the raw material to the finished product which is seldom equalled. October 1, 1821, the Bellows Falls business of Mr. Blake was merged into the firm of Blake, Cutler & Company, Mr. Blake taking as partners James I. Cutler and Alexander Fleming. After Mr. Blake's retirement from the firm and removal to the Forest in 1824 the firm was James I. Cutler & Company.

PAPER MAKING IN ALSTEAD, N. H., IN 1793—  
EARLIEST IN THIS SECTION OF NEW ENGLAND

It has been frequently recorded in histories that the first paper mill in this vicinity was built in Alstead, N. H., in 1798 by Bill Blake. An examination of some of the newspapers published a few years earlier, of which but few copies are in existence, show a mill in that village several years earlier than that.

The *Columbian Informer* of Keene under date of November 6, 1793, has this advertisement:—

“PAPER MILL

“The subscribers inform the public they have established a Paper Mill in Alstead for the manufacture of printing and wrapping paper and pasteboard.

“Oct. 28, 1793.

EPHRAIM & ELISHA KINGSBERY”

The same paper under date of May 18, 1794, carries an advertisement of Elisha Kingsbery asking for apprentices to the paper making business, which is dated April 21, 1794.

The *New Hampshire & Vermont Journal*, printed at Walpole May 5, 1795, shows an advertisement of James and Elisha Kingsbery asking for cotton and linen rags at their paper mill in Alstead.

In the *Rising Sun*, printed in Keene June 28, 1796, Elisha Kingsbery advertises for sale a new saw and grist mill on Cold River in Alstead, “near the paper mill,” and on September 20, 1796, “press paper” is advertised for sale at the paper mill in Alstead.

February 14, 1797, Mead & Kingsbery advertise in the *Rising Sun* that they have on the first instant agreed

to make and vend paper and linseed oil in partnership for one year, and on November 4, 1797, that paper advertises the partnership of Mead & Kingsbery dissolved October 23, 1797, and the business is to be continued by Samuel Mead.

The Political Observatory of Walpole on August 25, 1804, states that the partnership of Elisha Kingsbery, Isaac Randall and Bill Blake at Alstead, N. H., was dissolved on August 20, 1804, and that the partnership between Elisha Kingsbery and Bill Blake at Alstead and Bellows Falls was dissolved on the same date. In both the above dissolutions all accounts were to be settled by Bill Blake.

Record is also made in the Political Observatory, of Walpole, of a most unusual thunder storm and snow storm in October of 1804. The item is as follows, the date of the paper being the 13th:—

#### “EXTRAORDINARY SNOW STORM!

“On Tuesday last, 9th instant about the middle of the forenoon the weather suddenly changed from a temperate rain to a storm of snow attended with thunder and violent wind on the high lands. The storm continued with some intermissions until Wednesday morning. It is judged that the mean depth of snow which fell was 15 to 18 inches. Contiguous to the river it melted rapidly yet repeatedly measured 4 to 5 inches and covered the ground for more than 30 hours. On the hills it was considerably drifted which in places covered the fences and blocked the roads. The eastern stage could not run and the mail was conveyed on horseback. Greater damage was done to fruit trees and timber than was ever known to have been sustained in one year since the settlement of this part of the country. Foliage formed a lodgment for the adhesive snow, many



branches being broken by its weight and the wind felled many a trunk to earth. The western mail had not arrived when this paper went to press nor have we received papers from the eastern part of the state. The day on which the storm occurred was appointed for a regimental muster at Keene. The soldiers on their way were overtaken by the storm and detained. Very few reached the place of rendezvous and the occasion was frustrated. To enliven the gloom of the scene sleighs ran briskly during the continuance of the snow in this village. It still lies in considerable quantities on the high lands. By verbal information we learn that the storm was severe at Boston, shipping suffering greatly and a steeple blown down.”

### “OLD CADY PARKS”—CURIOUS BLASTING ACCIDENTS

During the first half of the last century a man, familiarly known as “old Cady Parks,” was a well-known character of Bellows Falls. He had charge of all drilling and blasting of rocks. He knew all about the explosives of that day and did all this work for the old “Company for Rendering Connecticut River Navigable by Bellows Falls,” which was the name under which the Bellows Falls Canal Company was chartered both in Vermont and New Hampshire. In addition to this work he was also the village undertaker.

In 1836, when the blasting for the old cotton mill foundation, which remained so many years unused, was being done, an immense stone was thrown high into the air and came down plump through the roof of the old Conant building on Bridge Street, crashing down through all three floors, but not injuring anyone, all the usual occupants being out watching the blasting.

A little later while some paper mills were being erected and considerable blasting was being done, a Whig convention was being held in the grove on Pine hill, then in the center of the village. It had been arranged that an extra blast should be set off by Parks at a particular point in the proceedings, as the village then had no cannon for such service, as it did in later years. When the blast was fired, a large stone smashed down through the roof of a tenement house on Westminster Street, where the Granger block now stands. That old building at that time had been used for the first school building of the village. It happened that

this house was at that time occupied by an extremely rabid Democrat, Hiram Graves, who was another well-known character of his day. He never thereafter could be convinced by the greatest arguments that it was not a put-up job on him and intended to strike his house because of his well-known political affiliations.

In 1850, when the railroad yard was being graded on the island, a large stone weighing about 80 pounds was thrown by a blast entirely over the Square and descended through the roof of the First Immanuel (Episcopal) church, which stood about 40 feet south of the present stone structure. It struck the cornice on the north side directly back of the organ, cutting off one or two rafters, and falling just outside the wall. The place where it was repaired always showed until the building was removed in 1867.

The most serious accident of that kind that ever occurred here was on February 18, 1928, when 250 pounds of dynamite, which was being used by the New England Power Company in its redeveloping of the water power here, was exploded. Three men who were handling it were instantly killed, pieces of their remains being distributed over a large space both sides of the river, over 1500 panes of glass in different parts of the village broken, and a number of thousand dollars damage being done.

## WILLIAM A. RUSSELL WAS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE BUSINESS OF BELLOWS FALLS

Few of the present generation know the conditions surrounding the establishment here of the pulp and paper business, which in three decades grew from practically nothing to a property valued at \$4,500,000 when it was merged into the International Paper Company in 1898. This phenomenal success was due largely to the wisdom, sagacity, foresight and energy of Hon. William A. Russell of Lawrence, Mass., at one time Congressman from his district, and later the first president of the International Paper Company.

Following the building of the railroads into Bellows Falls in 1849-1851, the canal, which had been built in 1792-1802 for navigation purposes, was discontinued for the passing of boats in 1857. It had been used for manufacturing purposes but little. Until 1869-1870 paper had never been successfully made from wood pulp. Mr. Russell was one of the pioneers in making extensive experiments which resulted in making it a success, and revolutionizing the paper industry.

In 1868 Mr. Russell had secured some comparatively small water powers in Lawrence and in Franklin, N. H., and had built small mills in both places. Paper had not then successfully been made from wood, but his faith in the possibilities was so great that he continued branching out. His first visit to Bellows Falls was April 15, 1869, and on that date he closed a contract, the results of which were the great prosperity and growth of the village during the succeeding half

century. He often told in after years of this first visit, and the peculiar action of the most eccentric character Bellows Falls had ever known, Jabez Hills, who made his coming here to locate his industries possible. Mr. Russell had never been away from the railroad station here, but in passing through the village he had seen the unused and dilapidated condition of the canal. Mr. Hills had been extremely miserly and had accumulated much real estate in different parts of the village. Part of this was the mill-site and rights of power of an old paper mill which had been burned in 1846 and had stood vacant and unproductive ever since. It was a tract of land between the present stone grist-mill and the river.

On the April day mentioned above Mr. Hills signed the only contract he ever made which went upon the town record. Although he died owning many pieces of real estate, all of which were accumulated by foreclosure instead of purchase, there is no record of his ever selling a piece of property in the forty years that he was a large factor in the business of the place. On that day he leased the land and power rights he owned under the hill to Mr. Russell, and that was the beginning of the interest of Mr. Russell in Bellows Falls.

Mr. Russell alighted from the noon train that April day and walked down around the canal and old foundation of the mill. He knew no person in Bellows Falls, and after a careful survey inquired who owned the property. He was informed it was Jabez Hills and that he would find him down at the eddy catching flood wood. He went there and found him and proposed a lease of the mill privilege. After Mr. Hills had asked

him a few questions and looked him over carefully he replied that he would lease, and would meet him in an hour at the office of a lawyer, J. D. Bridgman, up town. When Mr. Russell told the lawyer what Mr. Hills had promised, the lawyer laughed very heartily, telling him of the peculiarities of Mr. Hills and that he never had been known to make a contract, and he never sold property, relating many idiosyncrasies of the man. But he kept his promise and the lease was made and delivered within a few minutes. The town clerk's records show that it was filed at 2 P. M. and Mr. Russell went north the same afternoon, indicating the quick decision of Mr. Russell, as well as the unheard-of action of Mr. Hills.

The result was the building up of the business of the Fall Mountain Paper Company, and subsidiary corporations, to the extent that for a half century thereafter Bellows Falls ranked as one of the larger paper producing villages in the country. The terms of the contract were very liberal to Mr. Russell, and upon the death of Jabez Hills in 1871 he purchased the property, together with its rights. He later secured control of the Bellows Falls Canal Co., which was materially improved during his ownership by enlarging and deepening it. It has recently been still further improved by the expenditure of about \$4,000,000 upon it, and the power house for electrically developing and transmitting the entire power of the river.

Within a week from the signing of the Jabez Hills contract Mr. Russell had the foundations for his first pulp grinding mill started, the actual production of pulp being in October of the same year. This first pulp

mill was built under the name of the "New England Pulp Co.," and located just east of the present grist mill. His experiments resulted in the successful making of paper from wood and a number of pulp and paper mills were erected here. For many years news print paper was the principal production, and contracts were made to furnish many of the leading newspapers of this country, and some abroad, with their paper. The production reached in 1907 one hundred tons daily, sent to such papers as the New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle, Pittsburgh Gazette, New Orleans Picayune, Boston Herald, Baltimore American and many others, a number of them contracting locally for their entire stock used. Mr. Russell's accidental coming to Bellows Falls in 1869, and Jabez Hills' taking a different action from any ever taken by him in a long life, made results of great importance to Bellows Falls.

## BELLOWS FALLS ONCE BRED SILK WORMS AND PRODUCED REAL SILK

For some years between 1835 and 1845 Bellows Falls produced a quantity of silk, made from the cocoons of silk worm. At that time, as in various other decades, there was a wave of excitement in many places in the United States over the idea that fortunes could be made in this industry here as well as in other countries, but it has almost uniformly proved disastrous in this country.

The largest venture in this vicinity was made about 1838, when a number of citizens of Bellows Falls attempted it and continued the business four or five years. The two leading spirits in the enterprise were Dr. Artemus Robbins, a local physician who had accumulated considerable property, and Rufus Guild, a local merchant. The propagation of the silk worm at Bellows Falls was by methods identical with those still in vogue in China and British India, the great silk-producing countries of the world. The company set out very thickly all over the land now known as the "New Terrace," a variety of mulberry trees, the leaves of which are the principal food of the silk worm. The trees varied in height from 2 to 20 feet, looking at a distance something like an orchard of apple trees of various sizes. When left to ripen, the fruit looked similar to the blackberry, only longer and without the objectional seeds.

Within a few years, a medium-sized mulberry tree of this variety was still growing and bearing fruit at



Alstead, N. H., and there was a splendid specimen of rather large size growing on the Saxtons River road. The leaves were plucked at particular times and fed to the worms. A large building with the siding boards on hinges, resembling a tobacco barn, stood near the brow of the present New Terrace at a point near the street leading from School Street. Here were the tables and shelves upon which the leaves were spread, and on which the worms were placed to feed. In about 31 days from the hatching of the worms, during which time they fed upon the mulberry leaves, they formed the cocoon, which took but three days. A day or two later they were carefully picked and the worms killed by boiling or steaming. The cocoons were then unwound and the threads prepared for use. In this locality the winding and spinning was largely done by the small old-fashioned flax wheel then in so common use, and there are still in town a number of articles made wholly from silk produced here.

At one time the enterprise looked so favorable that the company was offered \$20,000 for its mulberry trees, upon the successful culture of which all depended, but the owners were so enthusiastic that they refused, and a year or two later a large proportion of the trees were killed by severe weather, the parties lost the amounts they had invested, and silk culture was never attempted here again. At about that time mulberry trees were set out upon a smaller scale in various parts of the town, there being a grove of them upon the land between Green and Cherry Streets. Another grove was located on the Olcott corner lot at Rockingham village near the

old Alexander Campbell mansion. It is not known that there was more than one place where the worms were actually reared and silk made in this town, that being on the New Terrace as stated. The town of Mansfield, Conn., at one time produced a number of hundred pounds of raw silk annually.

## THE VILLAGE OF ROCKINGHAM AND ITS EARLY INDUSTRIES—THE OLD MEETING HOUSE

The village of Rockingham, situated near the geographical center of this town, five miles northwest of Bellows Falls, has a wealth of historical lore of which many villages would be proud.

At, or near, the location of the village, the first three white settlers in the town, Moses Wright, Joel Bigelow and Simeon Knight, made their rude homes early in 1753. The charter of the town had been granted them by King George II of England the previous December. The exact location of these log cabins cannot now be pointed out, but the natural surroundings of the village of Rockingham are such as to lead students of history to believe it was there.

Certain it is, that when the settlers were numerous enough to organize the town government in 1761, the most populous place and the seat of government was located there. Until well into the 19th century, Rockingham was the principal village of the town; the first store, the first post-office, and the town meeting house were located there, the old building being erected by direct taxation upon all residents of the town. Town meetings were held there until 1869, when Bellows Falls having become the larger village, was decided upon by the voters for the holding of meetings, after two or three of the most stormy meetings ever held in town had discussed the question. The offices of both the clerk and treasurer were always kept in or near Rockingham village until during the '40s. They had been away from

there several years when the town meetings were changed to Bellows Falls. All church services of the town were held at Rockingham until 1809, when the "Old South Meeting House" was erected in Saxtons River village, but not until 1817 was a church built in Bellows Falls, the Episcopal church removing from Rockingham during that year. They had held services in the old meeting house until then.

In 1835, there were three taverns, two stores, two blacksmith shops, and an extensive tannery being operated in the village of Rockingham. The business there gradually decreased as Bellows Falls and Saxtons River villages grew, until at the present time one blacksmith's shop, a farmers' grange building, the old meeting house and seven or eight dwellings are all that remain of a once populous and lively village. A most disastrous fire occurred there April 14, 1908, wiping out the most of the business section, together with several dwellings, and none have been replaced.

The center of attraction to the locality at the present time is the old meeting house on a hill in the center of what was once the village. To this old edifice, during the last twenty years, more than ten thousand persons have made visitations, according to a register kept there by the town. It was built in 1787 by direct taxation, replacing a smaller one erected in 1773. After the town changed its town meetings to Bellows Falls the old building was allowed to become somewhat dilapidated, but was restored to its original condition by the town, and public subscriptions, in 1907. It is said by those who make early meeting house architecture a specialty to be the best illustration of the buildings of that

day remaining in New England as regards both exterior and interior. Gatherings in the nature of annual "pilgrimages" draw audiences once each year of from a thousand to fifteen hundred people, largely from a distance, to hear some of the ablest speakers of the day. These are held the first Sunday in August of each year.

The old burying-ground in the rear of the meeting-house dates from 1782, and it has been used ever since that year. For nearly a full century it was the principal burying-ground of the town. The first burying-ground in the town was located on high ground at the intersection of the Williams and Connecticut rivers.

About 1835, an extensive factory was projected on Williams river, near the present railroad station of Rockingham. A dam was erected about twenty feet below the present location of the highway bridge, forming a large pond, covering several acres. The company failed to build the mill, and, after expending much capital, the enterprise was abandoned. While the pond was there pleasure boats were used upon it, and it was made in many ways attractive for visitors. Not a trace of the dam, or of the projected manufacturing plant, is to be seen in that vicinity today. The entire locality in the vicinity of what was once this populous village, is one of extreme beauty of location, situated as it is near the mouth of Williams river, flowing into the Connecticut, giving vistas of hill, mountain and valley which would be hard to equal anywhere.

## TWO MINERAL WATER BOOMS IN BELLOWS FALLS

Bellows Falls has had two distinct booms in its history, based upon the production of mineral spring water. One did not last long and had a laughable ending, while the other covered several years, and both were noted incidents of this locality. When "Robertson's Tavern" was built in 1817 upon the present site of hotel Windham, the supply of water was secured from a well behind the house, between where the railroad now is and the canal. This water was good for cooking purposes but so hard that the different proprietors of the hotel had to use a "wash house" on the banks of the canal, using river water for their laundry work.

A few years after the well was dug a peculiar taste became apparent in the water. At about that time a great interest, which in some places amounted to excitement, had been engendered by the discovery of important and valuable medicinal springs in different parts of the country. The most important of these at Saratoga were being developed, and the medicinal qualities of the Abenauqui springs, located two miles south of Bellows Falls in the town of Walpole, which became so popular a few years later, were being discussed. The curious taste and smell of the water which came from the Roberston Tavern well were at once attributed to the same popular cause, and Mr. Robertson became convinced that he had a second Saratoga, with an equal bonanza for his pocket book. The fame grew for many weeks, the qualities of the well water

becoming more and more pronounced. People came from long distances with jugs and all kinds of receptacles to get the water, for which a fee was at last charged. It was soon reported to have made some marvelous cures of many kinds of diseases. A new and showy house was erected over the well and many people came to the tavern to board and get the advantage of continuous use of the water.

On day it occurred to Mr. Robertson that it would be a good thing to clean out the well and still further improve it. When those who were at work emptying the well came to the bottom they were chagrined to find the decayed bodies of two large house cats which had in some manner fallen into the well. Their presence had caused the offensive taste and odor to which the valuable qualities had been attributed. After the cleaning was completed there was no further indication of "medicinal" qualities, but the water was of an unusually pure and sweet taste. Mr. Robertson was ever after sensitive at being rallied upon his "medicinal" water, but he always claimed that he "had the advantage of having enjoyed fame, even if it was of short duration."

A few years later as a part of the tourist business, and to increase the popularity of the Island House, then a noted hotel, arrangement were made for the development of a real mineral spring two miles from the hotel a half mile below the mouth of Cold river, known as the Abenauqui Mineral Spring, which attained much popularity. It can still be found east of the Wells farmhouse, just south of the meadow in which stood the cabin of John Kilburn, the first white settler of Walpole.

In 1851 large sums of money were spent in developing it, including a large reservoir with a dancing pavilion over it, and pipes leading from it to a large granite fountain for drinking, from which the bottled waters were sold for a number of years. Bath houses and shower baths were expensively fitted up, public teams were run once in two hours between the Island House, this spring, and less frequently to the Mountain House, then located on Table Rock on Mount Kilburn, from which such a beautiful view can still be had of a large stretch of the Connecticut valley. Portions of the large granite storage tank, and other relics of the heyday of its popularity, can still be seen strewn around in the vicinity.



## LINSEED OIL MANUFACTURED IN BELLOWS FALLS A CENTURY AGO

Among the mills using water from the Bellows Falls canal previous to a century ago was one for the manufacture of a product, the process of manufacture of which few New England people of today know the primitive method. This is the manufacture of linseed oil and its by-product of oil meal, extensively used early in the last century for feeding cattle.

Among the very first mills to be erected at Bellows Falls, previous to 1824, was an oil mill, for the making of pure linseed oil from flax seed. It stood nearly where the former machine room of the Babbit-Kelley Company, Inc., stood, just south of the buildings of the new hydro-electric power development that is to use practically all the power of the Connecticut river.

The flax seed was poured upon a large stone floor, on which two immense stones like gristmill stones set on edge, were made to revolve around an upright shaft, like wagon wheels turning in a circle, thus crushing the seed. It then was shoveled into a large barrel of iron, about six feet long, made to revolve over a wood fire in a fireplace or arch, which used wood as long as the barrel was. After it was thoroughly cooked it was transferred into smaller very strong iron barrels, which had one movable head, and these were in turn put into a large log hollowed out with solid ends. Two of these strong barrels were used at a time, one placed at each end of the hollowed-out log. A press was set in motion, with cog wheels and screw, forcing the movable heads of each barrel inward and the oil flowed out of

the hollow log into receptacles to be shipped to the market. The cakes of oil meal resulting from the great pressure given them were then ground up and sold for cattle feed, while the oil was used in painting, as it is today. Its manufacture now is brought about by much more modern machinery than that of a century ago. A very few of the older inhabitants of this section of New England remember similar mills in different localities, but they all disappeared more than a half century ago.

## POTASH MANUFACTURE WAS AN EARLY LEADING INDUSTRY IN BELLOWS FALLS

During the years when the Connecticut river furnished the main artery of transportation to the markets of Hartford and New York, among the varied products of this section of New England which furnished one of the principal loadings of the flat boats was potash and pearlash. Today's inhabitants of this locality know but little of this important article manufactured in large quantities in this vicinity, or of the methods used to produce it.

For a number of years during the early part of the last century, the manufacture of potash and pearlash was an important industry. Pearlash was used as a substitute for baking soda, it being of a similar nature. Potash works were located in different parts of this town, as well as all over New England. The location of one place where it was made is still pointed out between Saxtons River and Cambridgeport. One of the largest works in this vicinity was located across the Connecticut river from Bellows Falls, a few rods south of the old toll bridge, on the east side of the highway, on the first hill the traveler descends in going towards Walpole. From these extensive works the hill mentioned has, until very recent years, been known as "Potash Hill." This industry was the first manufacturing of any kind at North Walpole except the two saw mills on Governor's brook, which flows through the village.

Potash and pearlash were made wholly from wood ashes. When the first settlers came to this vicinity, it was necessary to dispose in some way of the immense

quantities of trees that then cumbered the ground. For this reason large patches of forest were felled, the logs were thrown up in piles, and when sufficiently dry were burned. The ashes were then placed in leaches and water was poured upon them. The water, trickling through the ashes formed lye, which was boiled in a large iron kettle.

In a majority of the settlements large public potash works soon came into existence, like those mentioned above, and to these many of the settlers carried their ashes instead of making their potash at home. These were rude wooden structures, some of them being called potash, and others pearlash works.

At the potash works might be seen the huge leaches and the cauldron kettles employed in the making of potash, while at the pearlash works were immense ovens in which potash was baked. When it was of the right consistency it was stirred, and thus broken into lumps; it was then of a pearly white color—hence the name, “pearl-ash.” These products were used by the women of that day in making soap, and they formed a staple article of merchandise for shipment to the large cities. From this town they were shipped down the river by boat in large quantities.

## DISTILLERIES NEAR BELLOWS FALLS WERE PLENTY IN EARLY TIMES

A century ago one of the most common varieties of business in this section of the Connecticut River valley was that of the distilleries which were scattered here and there in this vicinity. They all did a thriving business, distilling cider, perry (the juice of pears), wheat, corn, barley and oats into the various kinds of spirits then in common use.

There was a distillery in this town located near the school house in the little hamlet known as Lawrence's Mills, one in Saxtons River village, one just north of the village of Westminster known as the "Allbe Distillery," and one of the largest was in the little village of South Charlestown on the east side of the highway about ten rods north of the brook, near what only a few years ago was known as the "Hooper place." This was widely known as the "Ingersoll Distillery."

Richardson Robertson, who died in 1905 at the age of 96 years, used to tell of his life as a boy in the old Stage House, the first hotel built in 1817 where Hotel Windham now stands. Among his reminiscences he told of a part of his duties for his father, John Robertson, who was the owner, as being each week to go to either one of these distilleries and get the week's supply of yeast for the hotel bread. Sometimes he went to one and sometimes to another. He told the writer among other things, "We kept 'Ingersoll gin' in our bar, thinking it was much better than that made by Mr. Wells." Ingersoll was the South Charlestown owner, and Wells was the Westminster distiller. Mr. Robertson said further

regarding qualities: "Nathaniel Tucker, who then owned the toll bridge, was a Dutchman and had a brother who operated a distillery in Holland. Mr. Tucker urged father to try his brother's gin, and after a while we got a 'pipe,' 128 gallons. This cask was too large to get into the cellar, so it was put in the shed and we drew from it to fill the jugs in the bar. Father had never liked domestic gin to drink himself, but he liked this Holland gin very much."

Albert M. Allbe, an attorney who died here in 1916 at the age of 94 years, used to tell of his father's (Ellery Allbe) distillery, which was on what is known as the Watkins farm a mile north of Westminster village. The old dwelling on the 240-acre farm is still standing. He said, "Soon after coming to this location, the noted distillery which had been run many years at South Charlestown by G. H. Ingersoll was given up. Father thought it a good opportunity for venturing in that line of business, and erected a distillery three or four rods south of the house on lower ground. The distillery had large copper stills with 'worms,' six mash tubs holding thirteen barrels each, and father made large quantities of alcohol from corn and rye. His product was shipped to Boston in barrels by four-horse freight teams. These barrels were made by John Sawtelle, the Bellows Falls cooper, whose extensive shop stood between Westminster and Mill Streets, on the location now occupied by the Barry block. The alcohol made by this distillery was used in Boston to make gin and other kinds of liquors. There was then no such thing as whiskey, but there was a Holland gin which was imported, and the product of such distilleries as

father's was used to make 'American gin,' as it was called. As the liquid in the mash tubs fermented, a froth arose which was used by all families in this vicinity for yeast, they coming long distances for it and taking it in pails. This yeast yielded a large revenue."

An incident of the distillery at Lawrence's Mills was connected with a man named Clark, who worked there and used to imbibe too frequently of its product. About 1810 his wife became incensed at her husband coming home intoxicated so frequently, and she went to the place one night with an axe and chopped a hole in the bottom of the large vat, letting the contents run out. The owner found fault to Clark for his wife's actions and he went home and took a horse-whip and gave her a severe chastisement. Tradition records that he accompanied his whipping with this expression, "Oh, dear wife, I don't do this because I want to; I'm doing it for your own dear good."

ALBERT M. ALLBE ONCE "KNOCKED OUT"  
SIR HIRAM MAXIM, THE INVENTOR

Albert M. Allbe, in his time a well-known local attorney, who died in 1916 at the age of 94 years, used to tell with great satisfaction of his athletic accomplishments as a young man. Of these, the fact that he once knocked out Hiram Maxim, who later became noted as the inventor of the automatic gun, and being knighted by the English government, was known as Sir Hiram Maxim, always gave him the greatest satisfaction.

As a young man Mr. Albee was in company with Levi Stevens in a brass foundry and finishing business in Fitchburg, Mass. Mr. Stevens was an uncle of Hiram Maxim. As Mr. Albee told the story, "Hiram was an awkward, uneducated man at that time, but he had great inventive genius. He later went to England and educated himself, becoming a distinguished citizen of that country. While he was working for us, he claimed he could handle anyone connected with the shop, unless it was Allbe and he 'thought he could him.' One noon, when the whistle blew to call the men to work, the workmen went through the office of which I had charge and kept account of the time and of the business of the firm. Maxim had with him a couple of pairs of boxing gloves, and laid one pair on the counter. I went along and tried one of them to see how it would fit my hand. One of the men called out to Maxim, 'There's a challenge for you, Maxim.' The moment the whistle blew for them to quit work in the afternoon, he rushed around to the different parts of the shop and called the men all down in the large office room, and arranged them in



a semi-circle facing the front of the office. He put on a pair of the gloves and wanted to try with me. He had made so much fuss about it, feeling I could easily guard myself from being hurt with a pair of gloves on, I kept myself on guard until I had nothing to fear, and then I pressed a little harder. He got near a large window in front of the office, I gave a considerably stronger blow than usual, and knocked him through the window, out of doors. The uncle had gone to Boston, and the next day I saw him and Maxim outside looking at the window. I told his Uncle Stevens we had broken the window and I would have it repaired. 'No, you won't. I will get Maxim to do some painting outside and mend it right.' The next morning Uncle Stevens said to me: 'Maxim said you hadn't much science about boxing, but you could strike harder than a mule can kick.' There could not have been much difference in our weight at that time."

TELEPHONES FIRST USED IN BELLOWS FALLS  
IN 1881

The first magnetic telephones used in Bellows Falls were put in during the month of March, 1881, for the American Bell Telephone Company by F. W. Childs & Co., of Brattleboro. The first instruments installed (they being on private lines and with no thought of a general exchange by a switch board) were those upon lines between the National Bank of Bellows Falls and the residence of its president, James H. Williams; the office of the Fall Mountain Paper Company, connecting with the machine shop of Osgood & Barker and the freight office of the Cheshire Railroad; and a little later a line was built connecting the office of Walker, Dewey, Blake & Co.'s brewery, near Cold river, with the office of E. E. Dewey, located where the plumbing store of the George B. Allbee Company is now on Bridge Street.

During the month of April of the same year, a stock company was formed and a line constructed between Bellows Falls and Saxtons River under the name of the Saxtons River Telephone Company. The Saxtons River instrument was at first in the shoe store of M. J. Amsden on Main Street, and the Bellows Falls one was placed in the dry goods store of George O. Guild.

The device was then in its experimental stage and a great wonder to residents. Many amusing incidents are told of the surprise and awe with which the farmers and others first heard voices at a distance. The distance between these two villages was then supposed to be about the limit of the power of the instruments. Few, if any, other instruments were installed until April, 1882.

On the 6th of that month the Boston & Northern Telephone Company of Salem, Mass., which was the predecessor of the present New England Telephone & Telegraph Company acting under the Bell Telephone Company, made a contract with L. S. Hayes of Bellows Falls to develop the business in a large surrounding territory and build exchanges at various points. This contract was in force until June 1, 1883, when the Boston & Northern Company purchased it of Mr. Hayes, the purchase including the Saxtons River Company. During these fourteen months, while this contract was in force, one hundred and fifteen miles of outside lines were erected, connecting Bellows Falls with thirty other villages. The first switchboard was in the small office-room in the rear part of the drug and book store of Hayes & Holden, now the Corner Drug Store at the south side of the Square, and was tended by the drug clerk. When the change of ownership occurred, June 1, 1883, there were eighty-three subscribers to the Bellows Falls exchange with no employees who did not have other duties to perform.

STORIES OF BELLOWS FALLS BETWEEN 1841  
AND 1898 BY GEORGE SLATE

George Slate was a well known and influential resident of Bellows Falls from October, 1841, until his death in 1898. He was born in Hinsdale, N. H., August 15, 1814. He was brought up on his father's farm and in 1839 engaged in hotel business, coming to Bellows Falls as a permanent resident in 1841. He was appointed deputy sheriff in 1846, and in 1858 he was elected high sheriff of Windham County. About 1854 he became connected with the bank of Bellows Falls as director and trustee, and with the Bellows Falls Savings Institution. Of the latter he was president two years, resigning his connection with both institutions in 1882. He was assistant United States district assessor four years during the Civil War and for a number of years held the office of referee in bankruptcy. He was the treasurer several years of the Connecticut River Mutual Fire Insurance Company, which had its head offices in the Times building. Mr. Slate was a leading spirit in many enterprises, among them the laying of the first water pipe from Minard's pond and for the first twenty years he was the manager of the water works, they being a private enterprise of which he was a large owner. Later these were purchased by the village. In 1845 Mr. Slate married Frances A. Griswold, who died in 1879, leaving one son, William W. Slate, who is still living, a merchant in Needham, Mass.

After the death of Mr. Slate in 1898 an interesting manuscript was found in his desk which he had planned upon reading at a Y. M. C. A. meeting, but died before

the meeting was held. It tells interesting stories of conditions and people of the village over eighty years ago. Among them:—

“When I came here in 1841 there were but three buildings under the hill, an old saw mill owned by the Canal company, used only a little, a paper mill owned by Green & Fleming, which was burned in 1846 and never rebuilt. The grist mill was owned by Col. Alexander Fraser, an Englishman, who sold his commission for \$30,000 and came here to reside. Now, gentlemen, if you will reflect for a moment how it looked when I came here, and then take a look as it is now, you will agree with me in saying the change is marvelous.

“We now go to the Island, so called. It is all that land lying north of the highway leading from the stone bridge that crosses the canal to the Tucker bridge, bounded by the river on the east and the canal on the west. When I came here there were but three buildings on this land: The toll house, Judge Baxter’s residence on the site of the Island House, and a house on the site of the Vermont Farm Machine Company’s buildings. Most of the land was used for cultivation. I have seen oats growing and cows grazing on the land where the depot and freight buildings now stand. There was no way of getting on the Island except by Bridge Street. Where Henry and South Streets are the land was used for cultivation several years after I came here to reside. On the three terraces now covered with dwellings, the land was used for cultivation, not one building standing on the same.

“There were but seven or eight streets in the village; now I suppose there are some 25 or 30. Only one schoolhouse in the village, a small brick building on the site of Mrs. Arms’s house near George K. Russell’s, with some 30 scholars. (This location is where now is the residence of Judge Warner A. Graham, on the corner of School and Cherry Streets.) Now we have five large

brick schoolhouses with some 800 scholars. There were only two churches, the Episcopal and Methodist. The Episcopal, which was of wood, after a time was taken down and the present one built to take its place. The Methodist church is the only one standing that was here when I came, but a story has been put on to it and it has no natural look to me.

“The canal was originally chartered and built as an aid in navigating the river to enable boats to pass up and down by the falls, and manufactured lumber on rafts to pass down.

“I think there were seven locks required to take boats from the eddy; the last lock was nearly opposite the gristmill. Previous to the building of the railroads these locks were used quite extensively through the summer season. The tolls amounted to quite a sum of money, but after the railroads were built about 1847, all the freight that formerly passed through these locks was transported on the cars, and the original purpose for which the canal and locks were built passed away, and manufacturing has taken its place.

“When these boats were in use on the river it required a captain and two hands, sometimes more, to manage them. They could sail when the wind was aft, but otherwise they pushed them along with what they called setting poles. I was acquainted with many of those captains, but I know of but one now living. Captain Richardson of Hinsdale, a schoolmate of mine, is still alive.

“There must be about as many thousand people in this village now as there were hundreds when I came here to reside. Business was done very differently from what it is now. We had no meat market, no drug store, no ready-made clothing store. We had a boot and shoe maker and a tailor. When we wanted clothes we went to the tailor and ordered them made; also went to the shoe maker for our boots and shoes. We had three stores. They kept an assortment of almost everything

you wished to purchase (dry goods, groceries, hardware, iron and steel, crockery and glassware, hats and caps, gloves and mittens, pipes and tobacco, butter, cheese and eggs, pitchforks and scythes, hoes and shovels, rum and brandy, dry and pickled fish and many other articles too numerous to mention). We were supplied with water from the old aqueduct and three wells. The old aqueduct still remains but the wells are filled with earth. This aqueduct is still in use by a few families, having been relaid a few years ago. The water comes from large springs on the Saxtons River road just beyond J. A. Thwing's residence.

“When I purchased my place, located on the corner of Oak and Atkinson Streets, where I now reside, it was on the outskirts of the village and I enjoyed it very much. Doctor Blake and William Stone were my neighbors. We all kept cows, pigs and poultry. We were not annoyed with each other's stock but Mr. Stone was very much annoyed by the skunks that came down from the hill and caught his poultry. He loaded his gun and declared if he ever got his eye on that skunk he would put an end to his getting any more of his poultry. Soon after this John G. Wightman, Mr. Stone's apprentice, came rushing into the house quite late one dark night and called for the gun. Mr. Stone asked what was up. Wightman informed him the skunk was in the yard. Mr. Stone sprang out of bed, grabbed the gun, saying, ‘I want the pleasure of shooting that skunk myself.’ John pointed to where he saw the skunk. Mr. Stone took good aim and fired. As the gun was discharged Mr. Stone said, ‘Go into the house, our clothes will be all scented up.’ They both rushed into the house and Mr. Stone's success gave him a good night's rest. He got up quite early in the morning and went to see the dead skunk, and instead of the skunk there lay two of his best ducks, shot through the head. Mr. Stone would say when they asked him about it that

he was willing to own all as the truth except the smell. But John said he complained about the smell.

“There was an old gentleman living here when I came, by the name of Jabez Hill, and if he had never been born the saying that it takes all kinds of people to make a world would not be true, for I am quite sure there never was another man like Jabez Hill. He came to Bellows Falls when a young man and died here an old man, I think some 75 years. He was a brother to Squire Hall’s wife. Mr. Hall was a man of wealth and influence, he was a merchant, built the Mammoth block, also built the house now owned by Hetty Green in 1800. Jabez knew every man in town, but he never spoke or bowed to a person except on business, and then he wasted no language. Men would occasionally try the experiment when they met him on the street by saying, ‘Good Morning,’ or ‘How are you Mr. Hill?’ but he would take no more notice of you than if he had been a marble statue. He lived with Mr. Hall and was a clerk in his store. He would tell you the price of an article but he never spoke in its praise. After telling you the price, and if you had any questions to ask it was yes and no, nothing more. After Mr. Hall’s death Jabez kept bachelor’s hall. Mr. Hall paid him good wages and Jabez saved every cent, put it at interest, and after a time had mortgages on several buildings, and afterwards owned them. He lived and dressed very plainly. It was said he wore one hat 20 years. Jabez had no enemies. He was once appointed postmaster and gave general satisfaction, and was always faithful and obliging. He was the first letter carrier that I ever heard of in that day. It was said that when letters came into the office for people two or three miles away he would take the letters, walk out and deliver them.

“For a long time his only diet was hasty pudding and molasses three times a day. He was subject to occasional freaks when there would be a complete change in his conduct and demeanor. He would then appear more



rational to people unacquainted with his life and habits. At such times he was usually enthusiastic over some scheme or business project. On one such occasion he prevailed upon a nephew to come here and he would set him up in the bakery business. He also engaged a sister to come and keep house for him. When the business was well under way he appeared at the bakery one morning and commanded the nephew to leave. He was not wanted there and told him he ought to have known better than to have come there. Here ended the whole business, and Jabez went back into his normal state.

“The oven-shaped hole in the bank in the rear of H. M. Amadon’s jewelry store (now the Goodnow store block), which has always been a mystery to our present generation, is the old oven built by Jabez Hill. He owned the block in front of it and occupied a small room in it at the time of his death.

“William Henry, cashier of the bank and later a member of Congress was very peculiar. He spent much time fishing, was very blundering and often getting into trouble. He always embraced the opportunity to fish through the ice as soon as the eddy froze over. He always wanted to be first. One time he went on the ice with an axe and fishing tackle. The axe sank and Mr. Henry caught on to the ice. He would throw his arms on the surface of the ice and try to raise himself out, but the ice would crack and down he would go. He continued to do this until he reached the shore, about four rods. Another time he was walking on the side of the canal lock, made a misstep, plunged into the canal and swam out. He was continually getting into trouble, but always came out safe. It was a mystery how such a man could be sent to Congress. There were twenty men better qualified to fill the office. Samuel Billings, the tanner of Rockingham village, one of the shrewdest politicians in the county, if alive, could tell you how it was done. Dr. Wells said it was his gold and silver talents that elected him.

MASONRY IN BELLOWS FALLS DURING THE  
“ANTI-MASONIC CRAZE” OF 1826-1855

During the “anti-Masonic craze” which swept the entire country between the years 1826 to 1855 King Solomon’s Lodge No. 45, of Bellows Falls, which had been chartered by the Vermont Grand Lodge in October, 1816, held no meetings from June 1828, until December, 1857, a period of over 41 years. The cause of the excitement throughout the country was the unfounded report that a man named William Morgan had been abducted and maltreated in northern New York because he had divulged the secrets of Masonry. The excitement spread and was the cause of formation of anti-Masonic political parties in practically all the states of the Union.

Vermont was the only state in the Union in which the anti-Masons came into power. In 1830, William A. Palmer of Danville was the candidate of the party for Governor, and this party was large enough to prevent an election by the people. Governor Crafts was elected by the legislature. In 1831, Palmer and the anti-Masons had the largest vote, but not a majority. He was elected by the legislature, after nine ballots, by a majority of one. The same thing happened the next year, and Palmer was re-elected by the legislature, after forty-nine ballots, by a majority of two. In 1833 Palmer was re-elected by the people. In 1834, the anti-Masonic party had begun to go to pieces. A large part of it had joined the Whig party, but Palmer was again elected by the legislature. In 1835, although Palmer still led the popular vote, the Whig party, led by Horatio Seymour, was strong enough to prevent an election by the people,

and to defeat Palmer in the legislature, but not strong enough to elect anyone else, and after 63 ballots the effort was given up, and Silas H. Jennison, who had been elected lieutenant governor, had to take the governor's chair. This ended one of the strangest chapters in the history of Vermont politics.

When the local lodge suspended its meetings they were being held in Carter Whitcomb's hall in the village of Saxtons River. The lodge records do not contain any record of the intention to suspend, or any mention whatever of that period of excitement. During the years when Masonry was dormant in this town the old members frequently wondered what had become of the charter and records of the former organization, but it was not until 1869 that any but one person knew their whereabouts. In the spring of that year Mrs. Benjamin Smith, an aged woman of Saxtons River, informed members of the order that a small trunk had been in her custody since the death of her husband over 30 years before. It had come into the possession of Mr. and Mrs. Smith from Carter Whitcomb, in whose hall the last meeting was held, and had been guarded secretly by them, as the feeling against Masonry was so strong during the first few years that it was feared the possession of anything pertaining to the order would work injury to the person in whose house it might be found. Mrs. Smith had carefully guarded the secret after her husband's death, knowing his deep regard for the order.

She was now becoming aged, and wishing to relieve herself of the care of the precious trunk she told a member of the order of her secret. All records and documents pertaining to the lodge were found intact except

the charter, which was found by L. S. Hayes in 1877 among the debris in the basement of a business block in the Square, and by him cleaned up and framed, and now adorns the walls of a room in the present Masonic Temple on Westminster Street. The faithfulness of Mrs. Smith to her husband's order was fully appreciated by them and on July 7, 1869, a large delegation of members of the order gathered at her residence in Saxtons River village, and Past Master Samuel C. Fleming, in behalf of the lodge, presented her with a beautiful tea set on which was engraved, "Presented to Mrs. Benjamin Smith, by King Solomon's Lodge F. & A. M., as a testimonial of her fidelity in preserving the ancient records of the lodge." The presentation was accompanied by appropriate remarks by other members of the order present at the time, and the silver testimonial is still carefully treasured by descendants of her family. The recovery of these records makes the local records complete, with the exception of the interim described, from 1816 to the present time. The order is in a most prosperous condition, nearly all the present reputable business men of the town being members, with very few having knowledge of such a widespread antagonism to the order here.

## OLD VILLAGE WELLS AND AQUEDUCTS OF BELLOWS FALLS

In the autumn of 1903, when the foundation for the present brick village building between Rockingham and Canal Streets were being laid, upon the same location where the frame building had stood since the summer of 1869 devoted to the purpose of a village hall and fire department headquarters, the workmen found an old and deep well under it. The walls of the well were still in good condition, although debris had fallen into it to above where the water had originally stood. It was from fifteen to twenty feet deep. In order to make the foundations of the new building of the most substantial character, the well was filled up and every trace of it removed. Considerable speculation was indulged in at the time as to the history of the well, and who had probably used it in former years.

It was dug in 1799 by Quartus Morgan, who in 1798 had bought and become the proprietor of the old historic "Morgan Tavern" which was located on the opposite side of Rockingham Street, and which still stands there, the oldest building in the village. It was recently favorably discussed by the U. S. government as a site for the new post office building. It was occupied by the Bellows Falls post office in 1805, when Mr. Morgan was postmaster. The well was dug in 1799 across the "road" for the use of the hotel and it soon become the principal water supply of all the residents in that section of the village. For many years it was known as the "Town Well" and in the last years of its history had a large well house and a long chain with a bucket on each end,

running over a drum operated with a crank. When one bucket ascended, full, the other one descended. Many residents of 50 years ago remembered seeing this well, and the house over it, and recalled going there for water. Until 1848, when the first pipe was laid from Minard's Pond, but few families in the village had the luxury of running water in their residences.

The next hotel of the village was built, sometime previous to 1826, on the location now covered by the block where Fenton & Hennessey's furniture store is. Its ell and barn extended as far south as the School Street stairs. In the yard was dug another well almost in the center of the ground now covered by the Boston Store building. Over that well for many years was a large wooden pump with a long handle. In front of it was a long trough into which the water was pumped for the animals, and buckets for the use of the hotel were filled by hanging them on the spout of the pump. A picture of the old building in the History of Rockingham shows the pump and its surroundings clearly.

Traditions of the Hapgood family state that Solomon Hapgood was the first village resident to bring running water to his dwelling. His residence was on the west side of Westminster Street, on the north corner of the present Hapgood Street, where the home of John E. Babbitt now is. Mr. Hapgood's aqueduct was made from pine "pump-logs," later changed to freestone from the quarries near Cambridgeport.

In 1822 a corporation was formed to lay a pipe and bring a supply of water from the large spring near North Westminster, and it supplied a dozen or more families many years. It was first laid with freestone

cut about two inches square and twelve or fourteen inches long, bored lengthwise, and the sections were connected by lead thimbles. This was later replaced by lead pipe. A few sections of this old freestone pipe are still treasured by citizens as souvenirs of a most primitive water-supply aqueduct. There are two in the town clerk's office.

The first pipe from Minard's Pond, the present water supply of the village, was laid in 1848 by a private corporation, chartered under the name of the "Bellows Falls Water Company." The pipe was only four inches in diameter as it left the pond, reduced to three as it entered the village. Water was first used from it in 1850. The works were purchased by the village in 1872, the price paid being \$22,000. The village at once relaid the pipe by an eight-inch one, which was in turn replaced by the present one twenty inches in diameter.

Early in the history of the use of the pond as a water supply a dam was built on the east side increasing the storage capacity. In 1904 this dam was relaid and raised five feet higher, again increasing the supply and making it adequate for many years to come. The pond now covers an area of 43½ acres and has an estimated capacity of 125,700,000 gallons. Frequent analysis of the water by the state laboratory has always shown it to be of remarkable purity, and this has been proven by the average good health of the citizens.

ORIGIN OF NAMES OF PLACES, INCLUDING  
"COWARD-ICE AND "HORSE-HEAVEN"

The origin of many of the names of places, streets, etc., in this vicinity is interesting. The name "Bellows" was first given to the falls in the Connecticut river at this point from that of Colonel Benjamin Bellows, the second settler of the neighboring town of Walpole, N. H., who was instrumental in securing the charter of this town, and was one of its grantees under King George. He was later the most prominent resident in all this locality and as the village beside the falls grew and required a name it was given his. The family name of Bellows was derived from the French words "belle eau," meaning "beautiful water."

The name of the Town, "Rockingham," was chosen by Governor Wentworth of the Province of New Hampshire, when he granted the town charter in 1752, being chosen, as were so many names in colonial days, because of its historic English association. It was so named for the Marquis of Rockingham, Charles Watson Wentworth, first lord of the treasury and prime minister of England 1765 and 1766, and again in later years.

The name "Charlestown" of our near New Hampshire neighbor, was given because Sir Charles Knowles of England presented an elegant sword to Captain Phineas Stevens of "Old No. 4 Fort," as the town had formerly been designated. Captain Stevens had commanded the fort, the site of which is now marked by a bronze tablet on a large boulder in the village, and had successfully defended it from a large party of French and Indians, under command of Monsieur Debeline,



during the French and Indian War. In admiration of the skill displayed by Captain Stevens, Sir Charles presented the sword, and in acknowledgment, the town, when incorporated in 1753, was named Charlestown.

“Coward-ice is a name found in the town records as early as 1792, and always so known most commonly in the intervening years. It is a section of rocky hill road about 6 miles north of Bellows Falls near the Roundy farm. It is close to the Connecticut river and is so called from a legend handed down through all the intervening years that one winter a bear of particularly savage appearance was seen out on the ice of the river opposite. A citizen living near started out boldly to shoot him, but he became alarmed and retreated without firing his gun. Both he and that locality were thereafter known as “Coward-on-ice,” later shortened to “Coward-ice.”

“Horse-Heaven” is applied to a steep hill and section of the highway about half way between the north and south lines of this town, near the Connecticut river, just north of the present residence of Lewis C. Lovell. The name is a most common one, used at least during the entire last century. The legend is that a man drawing a heavy load up the hill with a pair of horses became stalled. As the load ran back it went over the steep side of the highway and he is said to have remarked to his horses as they disappeared over the side of the road and fell to the jagged rocks below, “Go to Heaven” instead of the more common profane expression. Evidently the early residents thought such praiseworthy and pious remarks should be perpetuated, and they have been to this day.

PHINEAS GAGE LIVED NINETEEN YEARS  
AFTER A TAMPING BAR WAS BLOWN  
THROUGH HIS BRAIN

During the building of the Rutland road, September 15, 1847, a peculiar accident occurred which in all the intervening years has been considered the most remarkable in its results of any recorded in the medical world. A workman named Phineas Gage had a long iron bar blown entirely through his head and brain, by a premature discharge of a blast while making the rock cut a mile east of Cavendish station. The strange thing was that the man recovered and was able to work about 19 years thereafter. It was such a marvelous thing to relate that it was doubted by physicians everywhere and close investigation was made by surgeons from other states. The "tamping bar" was three feet and a half long and tapered at the upper end a distance of eight inches to half an inch in diameter at the lower end. It was very smooth like a spindle and passed through the left cheek. The bar entered the head on the lower part of brain and through the skull at the top of the head. In later years, the man expressed a desire that after his death his skull, as well as the bar that passed through it, should be preserved, and the two are now in the museum of the Massachusetts Medical College at Boston.

JABEZ HILLS—THE MOST ECCENTRIC CHARACTER IN THE HISTORY OF BELLOWS FALLS

If any person had asked the business men of Bellows Falls of 60 years or more ago who was the most eccentric person, or interesting character, ever prominently identified with the business interests of the town, without doubt the response would have been unanimously "Jabez Hills." He died September 16, 1871, at 83 years of age, in an old forlorn room in what was then known as the "Pettis" block on the west side of the Square where is now the building occupied by the Goodnow, Jewett & Pillsbury store. Mr. Hills had owned that building over 40 years and it was replaced by the present block in 1899. He never married, and during his entire life he had evinced a singularly miserly instinct, approaching greed, for money getting that in his later years became a mania, and he was often spoken of as of unsound mind.

He lived the life of a recluse, having few friends or intimate acquaintances. Those who looked over his room after his death found on top of an old cupboard a tin teapot which contained about \$700 in gold. Nothing else in the room was of value, it being filled largely with old tin pans that contained old rusty nails and bits of iron which he had picked up about town. His bed, which was nothing but rags, was of that nature that demanded that it be buried immediately in the bank behind the block.

A will was found containing only a dozen lines, which bequeathed his entire estate to a niece, Mrs. Harriet H. Bingham, of Boston, whose son-in-law, Hales

W. Suter, administered upon it until his death, and a portion is still owned by his descendants. That portion is now the Goodnow block, and the frame buildings leased to S. J. Cray. When Mr. Hills died he owned everything on the west side of the Square from the Trust Company's block to the School Street stairs, the location of the present Corner Drug Store, the old paper mill site with its valuable water power rights, and other property, all of which he had accumulated by foreclosures of mortgages. He never purchased but one piece of real estate, although he owned many at his death. He never sold one, the nearest to it being when he signed a lease of his water rights "under the hill" to Hon. William A. Russell, April 15, 1869, the beginning of the important development of the water power, and the starting of the Fall Mountain Paper Company, and other important manufacturing industries of Bellows Falls. He had gold in the bank amounting to \$545 and currency \$338, and other personal property amounting to \$4,637, the total value of his real estate and personal property being \$20,537.32 as appraised at that time. Probably he held more property than any other man here in his day.

Mr. Hills was born in New Ipswich, N. H., in 1788, and came to Bellows Falls in 1805. He was employed in the country store of Hall & Green, in a frame building standing where Union Block now does, on the east side of the Square. The Mr. Green was the father of Edward H. Green, the husband of Hetty Green of later years. For many years Mr. Hills wore an English queue and knee buckles, as many Americans then did. When Quartus Morgan, the first postmaster of Bellows

Falls, died, he was appointed to succeed him and he held the office 20 years, keeping it in the Hall & Green store. After 1830 he never had any business except to tend his hay scales, which were in the Square in front of where the bank block is now, and to accumulate money. He lived entirely alone and upon crackers and bread and molasses, purchasing them in large quantities and keeping them in his one room. He dressed like a beggar, had a peculiar stooping posture and for the last 20 years of his life he wore the same old stove pipe hat, greasy, battered and worn beyond any semblance of shape.

In his old building where he lived was a basement used as a bakery, and in it was an immense brick oven. In this oven residents of years ago told the writer they had seen his bed and knew that he slept in the oven in cold weather. In his room in the second story of the building, in the southwest corner, he had a small wood stove in which he used to burn wood four feet long, pushing the sticks in as they burned off. Over this he would crouch and one spring when he came out it was found that his shins were burned from the ankles to the knees from sitting day after day so near the stove. Before he was 60 years old he, at times, would "dress up a little," having a blue coat with brass buttons with his then new beaver hat, but he was never guilty of such a sin later in life.

With only two men did he ever in his later life approach intimacy: John Sawtelle, the village cooper, whose shop was in the basement of his dwelling that stood on Westminster Street where the "Barry Block," now owned by Theodore Scurtelis, stands; and John

Billing, the village miller, and father of Mrs. Charles W. Butterfield.

It was common knowledge that for many years he started out of the village late in March, with his trunk containing his valuables and old clothes loaded on the center of two long poles. He would take up the front end of these, dragging the rear ends on the ground, and go across the river into New Hampshire for a few weeks to avoid taxation. The writer was told this by citizens who saw him on these pilgrimages. One year his trunk was found high up on Mount Kilburn and turned over to the Walpole authorities.

Late in life he rarely spoke to anyone on the street. He was pleasant to those who befriended him, but petulant and cross to those who made fun of, or laughed at him. Naturally a certain class of boys picked upon him and shied sticks and old boots at him, leading to many encounters and laughable, but pitiful, situations. Old residents used to tell many stories of Mr. Hills' oddities and almost unheard-of eccentricities, which fully justifies the statement that no business man of Bellows Falls ever exhibited so many marked and singular characteristics as he.

The line of ancestry of Jabez Hills was from Joseph who came from England in the "Susan & Ellen" in 1638, one of the first Speakers of the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the subject of this sketch being of the 6th generation from him.

## TWO NOTED EDUCATORS BORN IN ROCKINGHAM—PEABODY AND SABIN

The town of Rockingham has been the birthplace of a number of persons who have become of national repute in the line of educational matters. Among them have been Selim Hobart Peabody, who became president of the University of Illinois, and Albert Robbins Sabin, who served many years as superintendent of the public schools of the city of Chicago.

Selim Hobart Peabody was born in Rockingham, Vt., Aug. 2, 1829, the son of Charles H. and Grace S. Peabody. His father was a minister of the Baptist Church of Saxtons River, and of him the only further local information found is that during the period of eleven years from June 10, 1822, Charles H. Peabody was one of eight young men from the close-communication Baptist Church of Saxtons River who were licensed to preach. The father died at Randolph, Mass., when the boy was thirteen years of age. The mother's name was Grace Stone Ide.

The lad had already made promising progress in school work when his father died, and was ambitious to prepare for college. He entered the Public Latin School of Boston in 1842, where he remained one year, but owing to his father's death was compelled to quit school and help earn a livelihood for himself and others. For five years he worked at various forms of manual labor and taught school; then at the age of nineteen he entered the University of Vermont, where he graduated in 1852, supporting himself meantime by teaching. For one year he was principal of the Burlington High School.

In 1854 he became professor of mathematics and physics in the Polytechnic College of Philadelphia, Pa.

After three years he became chief clerk of the United States Land Office at Eau Claire, Wis.; in 1859 he took charge of the city schools of Fond du Lac, Wis., and in 1862 he became superintendent of schools in Racine, Wis. Three years afterward he removed to Chicago, where he became an instructor in the city high school and prepared a series of juvenile books in natural sciences, and text books upon arithmetic and astronomy.

In 1871 he went to the Massachusetts Agricultural College at Amherst as professor of physics and engineering, after three years returning to Chicago as secretary of the Academy of Sciences. In 1877 he received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Vermont. In 1878 he accepted a position in the Illinois Industrial University (which later became the University of Illinois), of which he later became president. In 1880 he was in New York City as editor-in-chief of the International Encyclopedia, and while there prepared a volume of orations and addresses entitled "American Patriotism." In 1881 he was elected Regent of the University of Illinois. About this time he declined the presidency of Rose Polytechnic Institute at Terre Haute, Ind., and a position as Assistant Secretary of Agriculture at Washington under President Harrison. He was prominent in many parts of the country; manager of the National Educational Exhibit in Chicago in 1887; installed the Illinois exhibit at the New Orleans Exposition in 1885; in 1889, he was president of the National Council of Education; received the degree of



Doctor of Laws in 1881 from Iowa State University, and was actively associated with many scientific and educational societies in this country, England and France. He was made Acting Director-General of the World's Columbian Exposition; editor and statistician under Commissioner Peck for the Paris Exposition. He was president of the University of Illinois from 1881 to 1891, where he gained wide popularity. In 1890-91 he was Superintendent of the Division of Liberal Arts of the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo; and was Superintendent of Awards at the Exposition of Charleston, S. C. He was in the service on the staff of the Director-General for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at the time of his death at St. Louis on May 26th, 1903.

Selim Hobart Peabody was a descendant in the eighth generation of John Peabody, who emigrated from England and who settled in Plymouth, Mass., in 1636. William, a son of John, married Betty, the daughter of John and Priscilla Alden.

Albert Robbins Sabin, another widely known educator, was born on the ancestral farm of the Sabins, just north of the "Sabin's Bridge" between here and Saxtons River village, September 20, 1837, a son of Elisha Stearns Sabin, a lifelong business man of this vicinity. While a student at Middlebury College in 1862 the young man enlisted, was made captain of Company C of the 9th Vermont Regiment and served in the Civil War. After his return he went to Chicago and ultimately became one of the noted and influential educators of that city.

His first connection with the schools of that city was as a teacher in the old Dearborn School located at

the corner of Madison and Dearborn Streets, now covered by a huge department store. In 1887 he was made assistant superintendent of the Chicago schools, and in 1899 superintendent, which position he held until his death in 1913. When the news of his death was announced all school flags in Chicago were placed at half mast for ten days. Many tributes were paid to his memory, and to his services to the city. A leading educator said, "He was one of the greatest men the schools of Chicago have ever known"; another, "He was a great man, and one of the most useful the schools have ever had." A beautiful school building erected by the city since his death has been named in his honor "The Sabin School."

Mr. Sabin was twice married: July 11, 1862, to Mary Barber of Middlebury, Vt., who died in 1891; and he married Helen Mackey of Fredonia, N. Y., in 1893. He had two sons, Stewart and Albert R., Jr.

Florence Rena Sabin a niece of Albert R. Sabin and daughter of George Kimball Sabin, was a student at Vermont Academy and graduated from Smith College in 1893. She is today repued to be the most eminent woman scientist of the United States. She is a professor at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, and has been made a life member of the National Academy of Sciences of America, the first woman to be so honored. She is noted for her wonderful success in research work in blood cells. A scientist elected to the Academy is the highest authority in the country on his particular subject.

A NOTED POETESS ONCE LIVED AT BARTONSVILLE—NANCY AMELIA WAKEFIELD

From 1865 to 1869 there lived in the village of Bartonsville, a small village in this town, a poetess, who, although her fame rests largely upon a single production, was one whose writings have been read and admired by thousands and in all countries.

This was Nancy Amelia (Priest) Wakefield, the wife of Lieut. Arrington C. Wakefield, a soldier of the Civil War, who was credited to this town, and who made Bartonsville his home from about 1859 to 1869. He spent the last years of his life in Springfield, Mass., after the death of his wife. Nancy came to Bartonsville upon her marriage, which took place at her home in Winchendon, Mass., December 22, 1865. She was born in Royalston, Mass., December 7, 1836, but had spent the greater part of her life previous to her marriage with her parents in Winchendon. Between the years 1851 and 1855 the family lived in Hinsdale, N. H., and Miss Priest worked in the paper mill then owned by George Robertson. Her parents lived at some distance from the mill and she did not go home to dinner. During the noon hour, as she sat upon a bale of rags in the rear of the mill looking over the Ashuelot river, the inspiration came to her to write the poem, "Over the River They Beckon to Me," which struck a responsive chord in the hearts of the reading public and has gained in popularity in the succeeding years. It has been considered among the most pathetic and tender expressions upon that subject that has ever been published, and is to be found in many of the finest collections of poetry in

the English language. At the time of her death the Congregationalist of Boston said: "It may be doubted whether a single week has transpired in the last ten years when the verses might not have been picked up from one or more of our American newspapers in their issue of that week. We know, indeed, of no bit of poetry of late, from any pen, that has struck the popular mind so exactly." This popular estimate has strengthened rather than diminished in the years that have elapsed since her death in 1870.

Following are the first two verses of the poem, which indicate the beauty and tenderness of the entire eleven verses:

"Over the river they beckon to me,  
Loved ones who cross'd to the other side;  
The gleam of their snowy robes I see,  
But their voices are lost in the dashing tide.

There's one with ringlets of sunny gold,  
And eyes the reflection of heaven's own blue;  
He cross'd in the twilight gray and cold,  
And the pale mist hid him from mortal view."

While living in Hinsdale Miss Priest became acquainted with her future husband, who was then employed in the same paper mill. He later removed to Bartonsville and after his return from the army he brought her as a bride to this town to live. Lieut. Wakefield was an employe of the A. C. Moore mill in Bartonsville and the Wakefield and Moore families resided in the same dwelling. Mrs. Wakefield is still remembered by numerous older residents as of a beauti-

ful nature and attractive ways, although exceedingly plain in features.

From the time she was 14 years of age, Mrs. Wakefield always exhibited marked natural ability in the line of poetry, although she had but a common school education, supplemented by a term or two at Powers Institute in Bernardston in 1858, where she was a pupil of Prof. L. F. Ward, who in later years was a prominent teacher in Bellows Falls and Saxtons River.

Twelve years after her death her mother selected enough of her poems to fill a book of more than 300 pages, and, with an interesting memoir of the talented woman, it was published in 1882 by Lee & Shepard under the title, "Over the River, and Other Poems." An edition of only 300 was quickly exhausted and it has never been reprinted, so that it is extremely hard to find a copy at the present time. The talent, pathos and beautiful spirit which pervade the most of the poems show a mind of exceedingly fine instincts. Many of her poems were written carelessly in pencil, as if under sudden impulse of the heart, and a number of these were found after her decease.

Lieut. Arrington C. Wakefield, the husband, was born in Gardner, Me., December 22, 1833, and in 1906 was still living with a son in Springfield, Mass. He enlisted in Rockingham June 1, 1861, and served until July 11, 1865, being mustered out as second lieutenant of Co. I. A son, Francis Arrington, was born in Bartonsville July 6, 1867, and a second, Harry Cavino, was born May 28, 1869. Both were living in Springfield; the former was captain and the latter lieutenant of the Springfield company of militia. Both served through

the Spanish-American war and were at El Caney. Their only daughter died in infancy. Mrs. Wakefield died in Winchendon August 27, 1870, and her memory is held in high esteem by many old residents there, and by a few who knew her in this town.

DEACON THOMAS PUTNAM OF CHARLESTOWN  
HAS AN UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCE IN  
CHURCH

In all the early meeting-houses of New England in colonial times there was a large box pew built directly in front of the pulpit where all the deacons were accustomed to sit during morning service on communion days, and which on other Sabbaths was regularly the seat of the senior deacon. The old meeting-house in Rockingham was built largely after the pattern of that which had previously been built at Charlestown, as shown by the record of a town meeting held April 10, 1787, at which the voters of Rockingham decided to "Build the town House Just as Large as Charlestown Meeting House as to the square of it" and "5ly Voted to have the plan of the inside of s'd House agreeable to the inside of the Meeting House in Charlestown."

An incident which was in early years often told throughout Rockingham is worthy of being repeated although it occurred in the church at old "Number Four," the first name for Charlestown.

Thomas Putnam of Charlestown was, for many years, deacon of the old South Church in that town. In his official capacity Deacon Putnam occupied this square "deacon's pew" in the meeting-house of old Number Four on the Sabbath for some years as constantly as the day came round, until he was induced by the following circumstance to change it during the afternoon service for another.

Rev. Buckley Olcott of Charlestown and Rev. Thomas Fessenden of Walpole, father of Thomas Green

Fessenden, the noted editor and writer, were contemporaries in the ministry, the one having been settled in 1761, and the other in 1767, over their respective congregations, to which they continued their ministrations until called by the Master to go up higher; and as Mr. Olcott lived until 1793, and Mr. Fessenden until 1813, they were brethren side by side in their pastorates for upwards of 25 years, during all of which time their exchanges were frequent, and the pleasantness and harmony of their intercourse uninterrupted.

It happened during the summer of 1790 or 1791, that Mr. Olcott, being in feeble health and feeling as though he would like an exchange, dropped a line to Mr. Fessenden requesting him to accommodate him with one on the following Sabbath. Having received an affirmative answer, the respective gentlemen appeared in each other's pulpits at the appointed time.

Tradition informs us that Mrs. "Squire West," who was said to be the most notable woman of that time in Charlestown, with her accustomed hospitality invited Mr. Fessenden home with her to dinner. Among other things she placed before him for his repast was a platter bountifully laden with baked beans. As this was just such a dinner as Mr. Fessenden liked, he ate very heartily, praising highly as he did so Mrs. West's cookery. Dinner being over, they again repaired to the church where at the appointed hour the service commenced and continued favorably through the introductory. But the first head of the sermon was scarcely reached ere Mr. Fessenden, as a result of his over-heavy dinner, began to feel an almost over-powering nausea; and what to do under the circumstances became to him a subject of no



inconsiderable interest. Unfortunately with such rapidity did his sickness increase that all deliberation was out of the question, and the decision he was obliged to make was rather involuntary than voluntary. Finding that, whether he would or not, his dinner was about to leave him, he leaned over the pulpit and delivered it with a sudden outpouring on poor Deacon Putnam's head, which, already silver gray, was made more variegated by the descending shower. Of course it was not long before the seat of the senior deacon was vacated and he was looking up to see what was coming down. When he comprehended the situation, the following colloquy took place between him and the occupant of the pulpit, if not to the edification, yet much to the amusement of the congregation:

“Mr. Fessenden,” cried the unfortunate deacon, his locks still dripping, “don't you think you had better go out?”

“O no,” replied the good minister placing his hand on his stomach and looking down at the deacon, unable to resist a smile at his ludicrous appearance: “O no, Deacon Putnam, I guess not for I feel greatly relieved.”

But though Mr. Fessenden did not go out, Deacon Putnam did; and while in the forenoon he often afterward occupied the seat of the senior deacon, he never was known to do so in the afternoon again, but invariably took his seat at the head of the family pew, where he appeared to listen to the service with great attention. He had received one baptism and he did not care to receive another like it.

## THE STORIES OF BARTONSVILLE AND LA GRANGE

The little village of Bartonsville in the extreme northwest part of this town, located on the Williams river, was once a much larger and thriving place, but of which the present generation know but little. Previous to the disastrous flood of 1869 there were two paper mills, two stores, a hotel and blacksmith's shop. Now there is only the small country store and post-office and about fifteen or twenty dwellings.

The village received its name from one of its earliest and most prominent men, Jeremiah Barton, Jr., connected largely with the manufacturing and farming industries of the place. Quite early in the last century the village had a saw and grist mill located on the upper falls in the river, there being at that time two falls there, each capable of being utilized for power. The river was considerably larger then than at the present time. These mills were at one time owned by Mr. Barton, who came to town about 1830. As a young man he had been a purser on a line of lake steamers on the great lakes. He built the old tavern building which was opened as a hotel in 1841. In 1865 he sold the farm on which he had lived since coming here, located just out of the village. He then became the landlord of the hotel, which he conducted many years. His wife was Sarah Wetherbee of Grafton, Vt., to whom he was married December 30, 1823. He died at Bartonsville in December, 1879, at the age of 82 years.

In 1851 or 1852 the saw and grist mills were replaced by a paper mill, established by the late E. R.

Robertson, who later was a prominent manufacturer in Bellows Falls, who had a partner named Dunham of Westminster West. One of the employees in this mill was Albert C. Moore, who was later the senior member of the firm of Moore & Thompson in Bellows Falls. He learned the papermaker's trade in this mill, utilizing his knowledge of the business in the establishment of a business in Bellows Falls which became one of its leading industries.

About 1856 John Stearns and Noyes L. Jackson built a second paper mill on the lower falls, and these two mills furnished the life and activities of the little village until the disastrous flood of October, 1869. This flood changed the course of the river for a mile or more and left these mills, and the village, at some distance, entirely ruining the power that had been the life of the hamlet. When this flood came Albert C. Moore owned the upper mill and had just thoroughly rebuilt it at a large outlay of capital. The mill was to be started for the first time on the very day that the flood came. He was also the manager of the lower mill for its owners, who were the Union Paper Company of Springfield, Mass. From that time the business of the village of Bartonville declined rapidly, there being no manufacturing or other industries except farming.

Until about 1840 there was a little hamlet known as La Grange, of which present residents know but little, situated upon the plain where is now the town farm, about one-half mile west of the present Bartonville post-office. Until that time it had for some years two taverns, two blacksmiths' shops, a country store and a dozen or more dwellings. Now only four dwellings are in sight.

This was a noted stopping place for stages between Rutland and Boston, different ones putting up at each hotel, and business for some years was as promising as that of almost any other village in the vicinity. The utilization of the water power at Bartonsville drew the business to that hamlet, and La Grange gradually dropped out of existence as a village. A post-office was established at La Grange in 1835, and continued two years with Samuel Jackson, the storekeeper, as post-master. The post-office was established at Bartonsville in 1842.

As an instance of the small streams of this vicinity which formerly carried important mills: In Rockingham village, just beyond the old meeting-house, in the ravine on the road to Rutland, is a brook which at the present time is hardly to be noticed in passing the locality. Some portions of the year it is entirely dry. In the early part of the last century the extensive tannery of Manessah Divoll, grandfather of Natt L. and Oscar J. Divoll, was located on the north side of the ravine, but a few rods from where the old hotel stood. The brook furnished water power for the tannery, as well as for a cider mill, carriage shop and other industries. The tannery was burned in February, 1858, and no trace of it is to be seen now, although the power was used for other purposes for some time after the fire.

















